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Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-085 *1 May 1996*

CONTENTS

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 23 Apr 1

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Negotiations Department Head on Upcoming Talks With Israel *[AL-AYYAM 28 Apr]* 4

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Arafat Confers With Peres in Washington *[Jericho VOP]* 4
Arab-Israeli Talks: Peres, 'Arafat Discuss Closure, Hebron Redeployment *[Jerusalem Radio]* 4
Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Ceremonial' Start of Israeli-Palestinian Talks on 5 May *[Jerusalem Radio]* 4
Arab-Israeli Talks: Final Status Negotiations To Begin in Taba 5 May *[Jericho VOP]* 5
Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Arafat Asks Mubarak To Mediate With U.S., Israel *[MENA]* 5

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

Algeria: HAMAS Leader Mahfoud Nahnah Interviewed *[LIBERTE 19-20 Apr]* 6

Egypt

Egypt: Musa Optimistic About Arab-Israeli Peace Talks *[Cairo Radio]* 7
Egypt Opens 'Contacts' With Israeli Likud Leader Netanyahu *[London AL-HAYAH 30 Apr]* .. 8

Libya

Libya: North Korean Foreign Minister Arrives for Official Visit *[Tripoli TV]* 8

Morocco

Morocco: Hassan Views Chirac's Arab Policy, Mideast Peace Process *[Paris LE FIGARO 29 Apr]* 8
Morocco: Prime Minister Protests Algerian Attitude Over AMU *[AL-SAHARA AL-MAGHRIBIYAH 25 Apr]* 9
Morocco: Mining Ministry Announces Details of Gold Mine Deal *[LE MATIN DU SAHARA 27 Apr]* 10
Morocco: Minister Promises Pay Negotiations, Social Dialogue *[Rabat TV]* 10

Morocco: Editorial Criticizes Ministry's Neglect of Social Dialogue *[AL-'ALAM 27 Apr]* 10

Sudan

Sudan: Garang, Luk Sign Accord; SPLA Deputy Leader Views Accord *[London International]* 11

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Kuwait

Kuwait: French Frigate Expected 2 May for Joint Naval Exercises *[KUNA]* 13

Qatar

Qatar: Foreign Minister Meets U.S. Secretary of State *[WAKH]* 13

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Receives Messages on Muslim Feast *[SPA]* 13

ISRAEL

Israel: Clinton, Peres Speak After Accord Signing *[Jerusalem Radio]* 14
Israel: Further Details on Peres-Clinton Talks *[HA'ARETZ 1 May, etc.]* 15
Israel: Netanyahu Assails Clinton 'Engagement' in Peres' Campaign *[Jerusalem Radio]* 16
Israel: Press Views Peres Trip to U.S. *[HA'ARETZ 30 Apr, etc.]* 16
Israel: Angolan Foreign Minister Arrives on 'First-Ever Visit' *[Jerusalem Radio]* 17
Israel: Peres—Hizballah Commando Arrested in Paris *[Paris Teletext]* 17
Israel: Nigerian Envoy Vows Not To Allow Hizballah Camps *[Jerusalem Radio]* 18
Israel: Netanyahu—'Agreement Will Cause an Escalation of Violence' *[Barcelona LA VANGUARDIA 28 Apr]* 18
Israel: IDF Reportedly Evacuates South Hebron Outpost *[Jerusalem Radio]* 19
Israel: IDF Denies Reports of Evacuation of Hebron Outpost *[Jerusalem Radio]* 19
Israel: Jewish Resident Stabbed in Hebron; Assailant Hunted *[Jerusalem Radio]* 19
Israel: Hebron Knifing Stirs Antiredeployment Fray; Mayor Comments *[Jerusalem Radio]* 19
Israel: Baraq—'Nothing Terrible' if Hebron Redeployment Postponed *[THE JERUSALEM POST 1 May]* 20

JORDAN

Jordan: Al-Kabariti Welcomes Cease-Fire; King's Comments Noted *[London AL-HAYAH 28 Apr]* . 21
Jordan: Editorial Criticizes Clinton for 'Blind Support' of Israel *[JORDAN TIMES 1 May]* 21
Jordan: 'Absolute U.S. Bias' Toward Israel Criticized *[AL-RA'Y 1 May]* 22

LEBANON

Lebanon: SLA Posts Come Under Fire; SLA, Israelis Return Fire *[Voice of the South]* 23
Lebanon: Destruction of Buoys by Israel Violates Understanding *[Beirut Radio]* 23
Lebanon: Nasrallah—Suicide Bombers Will Not Bring Retaliation *[MENA]* 23
Lebanon: Fadlallah on 'Resistance,' Israeli Attack *[AL-NAHAR 26 Apr]* 23
Lebanon: Hizballah Leader Says 'We Are Ready To Make Peace' *[London THE TIMES 30 Apr]* ... 26
Lebanon: Hizballah Sees 'Positive Return' From Israeli Attacks *[London AL-MAJALLAH 28 Apr-4 May]* 27
Lebanon: Al-Hirawi Returns to Beirut From Paris 30 Apr *[Beirut Radio]* 27

SYRIA

Syria: Press on Peres' Washington Talks, 'Permanent Solution' *[Damascus Radio]* 28

Syria: Commentary—U.S. 'Money,' 'Ammunition' Do Not Bring Peace *[Damascus Radio]* 28

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Government Forces Reportedly Register Gains Against Taleban *[Tehran International]* 30
Afghanistan: Taleban Attacks Rebuffed in West, South Kabul *[Kabul Radio]* 30

India

India: Prime Minister Interviewed on Current Issues *[THE ASIAN AGE 27 Apr]* 30
India: Pakistan High Commissioner's Remarks Prompt Protest *[Delhi TV]* 36
India: Kashmir Issue Threatening India, Pakistan Nuclear Arming *[THE DAILY TELEGRAPH 30 Apr]* 36
India: Communist Party Leader Interviewed on Elections, Coalitions *[INDIAN EXPRESS 28 Apr]* 37
India: Article Claims U.S. Wants Rao 'Back'; Questions U.S. Motive *[BUSINESS STANDARD 29 Apr]* 38
India: Space Organization's Scheduled Satellite Launches Detailed *[BUSINESS STANDARD 29 Apr]* 39
India: Indian National Congress Election Manifesto *[INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS(I) MANIFESTO]* 40
India: Farooq Said Focusing on State Assembly Elections *[NAVBHARAT 7 Apr]* 56
India: Vajpayee Promises Ram Temple, Nuclear Weapons *[AJ 8 Apr]* 57
India: BJP Seen Ahead on Issues *[AJ 17 Apr]* 59
India: Narasimha Rao Seen Remaining Prime Minister *[AJ 10 Apr]* 59
India: Rao Seen Successful in Bid to Remain in Power *[PUNJAB KESARI 1 Apr]* 60
India: Election Said To Herald Era of Coalition Governments *[PUNJAB KESARI 7 Apr]* 61
India: English-Language Newspaper Election Coverage Seen Biased *[PUNJAB KESARI 5 Apr]* 61
India: Fernandes Ready To Support BJP Government *[JANSATTA 10 Apr]* 63
India: Rao Said Decimating Congress (I) *[RAJASTHAN PATRIKA 6 Apr]* 64
India: SP, Congress (I) Said To Reach Secret Agreement *[JANSATTA 10 Apr]* 65
India: Political Morass Seen in Tamil Nadu *[RAJASTHAN PATRIKA 11 Apr]* 65
India: BJP Said Ahead in Madhya Pradesh *[PUNJAB KESARI 10 Apr]* 66
India: Joshi Victory Seen Critical for BJP *[AJ 15 Apr]* 67

Iran

Iran: Foreign Ministry Refutes U.S. Allegations on Iraqi Oil *[IRNA]* 68
Iran: Hajj Pilgrims Chant Anti-U.S., Israel Slogans *[IRNA]* 68
Iran: Daily Urges Dayton Accord To Respond to Needs of People *[IRNA]* 68
Iran: Commentary Views 'Arafat's Situation, Israel *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 27 Apr]* 69
Iran: Daily on 'Retaliatory Attacks' by 'Martyrdom Seekers' *[KEYHAN 20 Apr]* 69
Iran: Rafsanjani Sends National Day Greetings to South Africa *[IRNA]* 70
Iran: Rafsanjani Greets Leaders of Muslim States on Islamic Feast *[IRNA]* 70
Iran: Rafsanjani Opens Refrigerator Plant in Shiraz *[IRNA]* 70
Iran: President Rafsanjani Opens Power Plant in Shiraz *[IRNA]* 71
Iran: President Rafsanjani Inaugurates Work on Shiraz Dam Project *[IRNA]* 71
Iran: Hashemi-Rafsanjani Addresses Fars Clerics *[Tehran Radio]* 71
Iran: Iran, Turkmenistan To Collaborate on Radio, Television *[ETTELA'AT 18 Apr]* 72
Iran: Tajikistan Bars Students From Coming to Iran *[SALAM 23 Apr]* 72
Iran: Paper Condemns Cultural 'Onslaught From Within' *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 25 Apr]* ... 73
Iran: Paper Views Minister's Comments on Press Freedom *[BAHMAN 27 Apr]* 73
Iran: Pro-Rafsanjani Weekly To Close After 17 Issues *[SALAM 28 Apr]* 74

Iran: Daily Criticizes Decision To Upgrade Nuclear Reactors *[IRNA]* 74
Iran: Rafsanjani Eyeing Assembly of Experts *[London KEYHAN 21 Mar]* 75

Pakistan

Pakistan: Muslim Militant Leader Shot Dead in Punjab *[AFP]* 75

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Troops Harass Refugees; Protest Held *[Tamil Eelam News WWW 27 Apr]* 75
Sri Lanka: LTTE Criticizes Colombo's Disinformation Campaign *[Tamil Eelam News WWW 28 Apr]* 76

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 23 Apr

NC3004124096

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 23 April edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Musa Criticizes U.S., Other Stances on Israeli Attacks
2. Journalists' Sit-In Protests Israeli Aggression in Lebanon
3. Protests Against Israeli Aggression in Lebanon Reported
4. Islamic Group Threatens To Attack 'Jewish' Interests in Egypt
5. Newspaper Claims U.S., Israel Preparing Attack on Libya
6. Opposition Leaders To Submit Protest to U.S. Embassy
7. Opposition Demands Implementation of Joint Defense Pact
8. Al-Azhar Shaykh Delivers Friday Sermon on Lebanon
9. AL-HAYAH Interview With Suspect Mustafa Hamzah Published
10. Mustafa Mashhur Criticizes Arab, Islamic Inaction on Lebanon
11. Pakistani Ambassador to Egypt Interviewed
12. Column Claims Islamic Resistance To Rescue Nation
13. Column Criticizes Mubarak's Weak Stance on Lebanon

MUSA CRITICIZES U.S., OTHER STANCES ON ISRAELI ATTACKS

Rabi' Shahin writes an 80-word report on page one citing statements by Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa in which the latter criticizes the U.S. and international stances on the Israeli aggression against Lebanon. Musa describes the U.S. stance as a "ridiculous tactic" and accuses the United States of "allowing Israel to attack Lebanon and giving it the green light to do so." Musa affirms that "the Israeli occupation creates frustration and generates the appropriate atmosphere for committing certain operations that are difficult to control."

JOURNALISTS' SIT-IN PROTESTS ISRAELI AGGRESSION IN LEBANON

Khalid Yunus authors a 50-word report also on page one in which he notes that today journalists will hold a two-hour sit-in at their association to protest the Israeli aggression in Lebanon.

PROTESTS AGAINST ISRAELI AGGRESSION IN LEBANON REPORTED

A 1000-word report on page one and continued on page eight by 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad and Tariq 'Abd-al-Hamid discusses demonstrations by students in Egypt and around the world against the Israeli aggression in Lebanon. The report notes that Cairo University students "raised black banners over the campus and prayers were held for the souls of the martyrs who fell during the attacks." The students protested against the weak Arab governments' stances on the bestial Zionist aggression against the Lebanese people. The report notes that strikes and demonstrations took place in various parts of the world. The Muslim Brotherhood in the West also issued a statement in which it called on the Islamic nation to support the Lebanese resistance. The statement condemns the Sharm al-Shaykh summit statement, which did not categorize the Israeli aggression against Lebanon as terrorism. The statement calls on the Arab and Islamic governments "to move away from this fake peace and the failed Sharm al-Shaykh agreement and to insist on a real peace."

According to the report, the staff members at Cairo University "called on President Mubarak to expel the Zionist ambassador from Cairo and freeze all types of relations with Israel in protest against the Israeli aggression in Lebanon." Other examples of protests and demonstrations from around the world are cited in the report, such as in Libya.

ISLAMIC GROUP THREATENS TO ATTACK 'JEWISH' INTERESTS IN EGYPT

Subhi Buhayri and Dawud Hasan publish a report on page one in which they note that "important surprises" were revealed through the statements of Faraj 'Abd-al-Qadir, security officer at the Europa Hotel in Cairo. 'Abd-al-Qadir reportedly said that an Israeli group was supposed to be travelling to Alexandria the day the terrorist attack took place on the hotel, but that the trip was postponed by the travel agency. He further said: "The public security officers who were supposed to be guarding the hotel had not been in their positions since last February. This made it easier for the massacre to take place. The police commanders in al-Jizah knew of this and used to pass the hotel every day, only to find that the security officers were not there. They found it sufficient to write violation reports about the security officers."

He added that he got an anonymous telephone call five hours after the attack threatening to blow up the

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hotel. He also received a fax from the Islamic Group claiming responsibility for the attack. The report notes that the Islamic Group issued a statement on Friday, 19 April, in which it claimed responsibility for the attack on a group of Greek tourists at the Europa Hotel in Cairo. The statement said that those who carried out the attack were taken by surprise when the "Jewish group of tourists was changed to a Greek group of tourists in accordance with the security measures only to protect the lives of the Jews." The Islamic Group statement further announced that "all Jewish interests in Egypt are targeted by its members until the Zionist aggression on Lebanon stops."

NEWSPAPER CLAIMS U.S., ISRAEL PREPARING ATTACK ON LIBYA

Mahmud Bakri writes a 700-word report on page one that is continued on page eight in which he discusses deliberations in the Pentagon to deal Libya a military blow in an operation named "Rolling Mediterranean" under the pretext that it is building a chemical weapons' factory.

OPPOSITION LEADERS TO SUBMIT PROTEST TO U.S. EMBASSY

A 20-word report on page one says a delegation from the opposition parties and forces will go to the U.S. Embassy in Cairo on 24 April to submit a memorandum of protest on the biased U.S. stance toward Israel.

OPPOSITION DEMANDS IMPLEMENTATION OF JOINT DEFENSE PACT

Page one publishes a 500-word report that includes the text of a statement issued by the leaders of the political parties and popular forces in which they condemn the Israeli aggression on Lebanon. They salute the steadfastness of Syria and Lebanon in the face of Israel and affirm the rights of the Lebanese and Palestinian people under occupation to resist the occupation by all means at their disposal, including armed struggle. "They also confirm their adherence to the Joint Defense Pact and ask the Arab governments to implement its paragraphs in order to stop the continuing aggression on the Lebanese territories," the report adds. Among other demands, they "ask the Arab League to take a firm stance to deter the Israeli aggression in implementation of the Arab League Charter." Among the signatories of the statement are Ibrahim Shukri for the Labor Party and Mustafa Mashhur for the Muslim Brotherhood.

AL-AZHAR SHAYKH DELIVERS FRIDAY SERMON ON LEBANON

'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad writes a 500-word article on page two about the thousands of worshipers who attended Friday prayers for Lebanon at al-Azhar Mosque. These prayers were called for by AL-SHA'B and a congress was held after the prayers. The report notes that the government responded positively this time to the opposition and sent the al-Azhar shaykh and the Awqaf minister to attend the prayers and the congress. The al-Azhar shaykh delivered the Friday sermon in which he said all kinds of aid should be given to the oppressed in the world. Al-Azhar shaykh said: "Those who blow themselves up among enemies to confront the latters' aggression are martyrs in the eyes of God." He added: "As for blowing oneself up among innocent civilians, that include Muslims, women, children, and elderly, this is undoubtedly a crime." Al-Azhar shaykh condemned the killing of the Greek tourists at the Europa Hotel. He praised the statement issued by the Muslim Brotherhood that condemned the incident and denounced the killing of innocent people, women, and elderly by considering it an act that violates religion.

AL-HAYAH INTERVIEW WITH SUSPECT MUSTAFA HAMZAH PUBLISHED

Page four publishes the text of an interview with Mustafa Hamzah, the first suspect in the assassination attempt on President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, conducted by Ahmad Muwaffaq Zaydan, AL-HAYAH correspondent in Afghanistan. The interview was published in the London-based Arabic language newspaper AL-HAYAH on 21 April.

MUSTAFA MASHHUR CRITICIZES ARAB, ISLAMIC INACTION ON LEBANON

Mustafa Mashhur writes a 2000-word article on page five entitled "Our Need For a New Stance" in which he condemns the Arab and international governments' inaction on the massacres in Lebanon. He notes that big western powers, like the United States, Britain, and France supported the Israeli aggression, other western countries maintained silence, and the Arab countries merely condemned and renounced the aggression while normalization with Israel continued. Mashhur criticizes the Sharm al-Shaykh summit where world leaders congregated to condemn "martyrdom operations" in which a few Israelis died, while these same leaders took no action whatsoever over the destruction of Lebanon and the massacres there. He then discusses Egypt's role in the region saying: "Despite the fact that Egypt is shackled by the Camp David Agreement, it is required to perform a historic role in gathering the Arab

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stance under the Arab League banner and in reviving the charters and agreements signed by the League's members. Egypt should perform this role voluntarily without waiting for an invitation from anyone." He notes that leadership does not lie in speeches and slogans. He wonders where the peace that our Arab countries have been calling for has gone. He says: "They [the Israelis and Americans] are putting the Arab governments that are placating them in embarrassing situations that weaken their positions and paralyze their wills." He stresses that the time has come for the Arabs to review their peace policy and demands a popular referendum to find out what the people think about the enemy. He also demands that the will of the people should be respected if the Arab governments want true democracy to prevail.

Mashhur analyzes the events in Lebanon and notes that the enemy "wants Lebanon to be separated from Syria in order to sign a separate agreement with Lebanon. This would force Syria to also sign a separate agreement." The enemy would then secure all cordon states and proceed to do what it pleases in Palestine and Jerusalem. He criticizes 'Arafat for amending the Palestinian National Charter during the aggression on Lebanon. He addresses the ministers of the Arab countries who will be meeting in Brussels soon with the ministers of the countries who took part in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, saying: "The Arab ministers who will be attending the Brussels conference should denounce the U.S. and British stances, which supported the aggression on Lebanon. The Arab and Islamic countries should declare their protests on this stance." Mashhur concludes his article by calling for unity among the Arabs, closeness to God, and openness between rulers and people.

PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT INTERVIEWED

An interview with Pakistani Ambassador to Egypt Mansur Alam by an unidentified AL-SHA'B correspondent in Cairo consisting of 1000 words is published on page five. The ambassador discusses the U.S. policy toward Pakistan, Pakistan's relations with Iran, and other matters.

COLUMN CLAIMS ISLAMIC RESISTANCE TO RESCUE NATION

Qutb al-'Arabi writes a 400-word article on page eight entitled "The Islamic Resistance is the Hope of the Nation." He begins his article saying: "The Islamic Resistance in Lebanon and Palestine has proven, through its heroic operations against the occupying enemy, that the Islamic movement has become the nation's hope for salvation. It is the right of every Arab and Muslim. In fact, all the oppressed in the world should raise their heads in pride for the painful blows the Hizballah, Hamas, and al-Jihad organizations are dealing the enemy inside and outside the occupied territories, which has made it unable to confront them alone. The enemy resorted to the world around it, whose leaders met very speedily in Sharm al-Shaykh, to rescue it from drowning." Al-'Arabi notes that the Islamic movements are fighting two battles: one, on the internal level, against corruption, oppression, and tyranny; the other, on the external level, against alienation and the Zionist project. He calls on politicians and intellectuals to review their policies toward the Islamic groups and to stop harassing them. "They should take the hand of the Islamic groups and employ their experience, knowledge, and potentials to resist the enemy," al-'Arabi says. He notes that although the rulers may fail to resist the enemy, the Islamic people will never do so as long as they carry God's book in their hands and follow the Prophet's teachings.

COLUMN CRITICIZES MUBARAK'S WEAK STANCE ON LEBANON

Muhammad 'Abd-al-Quddus writes his 500-world "Country Folk" column on page 10. It is entitled "Israel's Terrorism and the Groups." He comments on the terrorist attack on a group of Greek tourists in Cairo and notes that the real targets were Israeli tourists. He wonders what would have happened had the group of Israeli tourists been struck, instead of the Greeks. He expresses his regrets over the death of the Greek tourists but notes that it is unthinkable for the Israeli enemy to be raiding Lebanon and killing Lebanese civilians while the sons of Israel travel around in Egypt freely and fearlessly. He discusses what the tragedy in Lebanon has revealed. The most important revelation is that the Islamic Resistance is Israel's foremost enemy. The Lebanese tragedy also revealed the true colors of 'Arafat, the former grand Palestinian fighter whom Peres insisted on meeting during the Israeli aggression on Lebanon. In addition, it showed that Mubarak's position on Lebanon was much weaker than expected. He hastily convened the Sharm al-Shaykh summit to raise Peres' stakes in the elections, "but the fall of innocent victims at the hands of the Zionists prompted only a very polite and proper protest."

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Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Negotiations Department Head on Upcoming Talks With Israel

TA3004163296 Ramallah AL-AYYAM in Arabic 28 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by 'Abd-al-Ra'uf Arna'ut]

[FBIS Translated Text] Hasan 'Asfur, head of the negotiations department, has told AL-AYYAM that the Israeli Government notified the Palestinian side that it will determine its official stance on the venue of the final talks within 48 hours.

'Asfur stressed that Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu-Mazin), member of the PLO Executive Committee, will head the Palestinian delegation to these talks, slated to begin on 4 May.

A Palestinian-Israeli disagreement recently evolved about the venue in which the talks were to be held. Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat insists that these talks be held in the Arab Republic of Egypt (Cairo or Taba) and the Israeli side has proposed that the talks be held in Oslo.

'Asfur considered the Labor Party's decision to cancel the paragraph opposing the establishment of a Palestinian state from its platform as a positive initiative that will pave the way for the Labor Party's agreement — in the final talks — to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

'Asfur said: Had this paragraph remained, the Labor Party's stance in the talks would have been determined in advance and would have precluded the establishment of a state, but now the talks are open.

'Asfur stressed that preparations for the final talks, which will deal with fundamental issues, foremost of all Jerusalem, settlements, the refugees, and borders, are proceeding very positively on the Palestinian side. 'Asfur said: The preparations have been conducted in a superb manner.

Replying to a question on the Palestinian stance regarding the separation issue, 'Asfur emphasized that the Palestinian side favors a political separation, not a blockade. He said: "We seek a political separation with open borders and relations that differ from traditional relations. These relations should be determined on the basis of the final talks."

'Asfur noted that, at a closed meeting held a few days ago in Gaza, the negotiations department drew up the negotiating plan and made preparations for the points not implemented so far in the Palestinian-Israeli interim agreement.

'Asfur said that the recent decision by the opposition right-wing Likud Party agreeing to negotiate with the PLO was not surprising. He said: We believe that every Israeli Government has no choice but to negotiate with the PLO.

In a related development, a joint Palestinian-Israeli committee, headed by Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat from the Palestinian side and Yo'el Singer from the Israeli side, plans to define the points that will be placed on the agenda of the final talks.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Arafat Confers With Peres in Washington

JN0105060296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat met with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in Washington. They discussed issues related to the final settlement negotiations. President 'Arafat arrived in Washington late last night on an official visit the United States. During the visit, President 'Arafat will meet with U.S. President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher. President 'Arafat will also meet with the president of the World Bank in Washington and participate in an economic conference on the Middle East.

President 'Arafat's talks will deal with the difficulties the Palestinian people are facing under the continued Israeli military siege imposed on Palestine and the need for donor states to fulfill their promises.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Peres, 'Arafat Discuss Closure, Hebron Redeployment

TA0105053096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] After his meeting with President Clinton, Prime Minister Peres met with Palestinian Authority President Yasir 'Arafat. They discussed Israel's partial closure of the West Bank and Gaza, the revision of the PLO Charter, and the Israeli redeployment in Hebron.

Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Ceremonial' Start of Israeli-Palestinian Talks on 5 May

TA3004142896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel and the Palestinians are about to make a first ceremonial step toward the permanent status talks. Our political correspondent

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Shlomo Raz reports that the Israeli and Palestinian delegations will hold a preliminary meeting in Taba on the afternoon of 5 May, and the dates for subsequent meetings and the format of talks will be decided later.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Final Status Negotiations To Begin in Taba 5 May

JN0105062596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hasan 'Asfur, director general of negotiations affairs, said the final settlement negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides will begin in Taba, Egypt, on 5 May. This was confirmed by Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa in Cairo. He said that Palestinian amendment of the Palestinian National Charter and Israel's cancellation of the clauses opposing the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, as provided in the Israeli Labor Party platform, indicate that both parties are serious in their efforts to reach a just and comprehensive solution in the region.

Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Arafat Asks Mubarak To Mediate With U.S., Israel

NC3004134196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1240 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Apr (MENA)—During their talks yesterday on the arrangements and preparations of the Palestinian party to begin the final-stage negotiations between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and Israel, Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat told President Husni Mubarak that there is a need for Egypt to intercede with Israel and the U.S. Administration to persuade them to agree to begin these negotiations in Cairo, Taba, or Sharm al-Shaykh. AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I today cites the Palestinian ambassador in Cairo, Zuhdi al-Qidrah, who attended the talks between Mubarak and 'Arafat, as saying that President 'Arafat requested that the meetings of the five committees on the final-stage negotiations be distributed among Cairo and northern and southern areas of Sinai, with the possibility of transferring the negotiations of the Jerusalem committee to Morocco. These committees are entrusted with discussing the issues of refugees, the settlements, determination of the Palestinian people's future, and the status of Jerusalem.

Ambassador al-Qidrah said that President 'Arafat stressed the need for Egypt to endorse these essential demands so that the Egyptian authorities can intervene immediately to solve any differences that may obstruct the negotiations, as happened in the negotiations to expand self-rule. Al-Qidrah said that the Egyptian leadership has responded positively to the Palestinian request and will begin broad contacts with Israel in this respect.

AL-AHRAM reported this morning that Israel demands that the final-stage negotiations with the Palestinians be held in Oslo. The paper cited its correspondent in Gaza as saying that the Norwegian Government extended an invitation to the PA to host the talks with the Israelis, but 'Arafat insisted that the choice be between Cairo and Taba in Egypt.

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Algeria

Algeria: HAMAS Leader Mahfoud Nahnah Interviewed

LD3004144496 Algiers LIBERTE in French 19-20 Apr 96 pp 1,2

[Interview with Mahfoud Nahnah, HAMAS leader and presidential candidate in November 1995 elections, by Badreddine Manaa; place and date not given: "Nahnah to LIBERTE and AL KHABAR — The Conference Will Be Doomed to Failure if..."]

[FBIS Translated Text] Mahfoud Nahnah, in an interview he gave to LIBERTE and AL KHABAR, cannot conceal a feeling of frustration with the approach adopted by the authorities, even if he uses a very formal language. Thus, the Islamic leader expresses his "reservations" about the principle of a national conference and talks openly about his preference for holding a general election as soon as possible:

[Manaa] You have just met President Zeroual. How did this meeting go?

[Nahnah] The meeting was held within the framework of the consultations initiated by the president of the Republic. Thus, our insistence on talking about consultations and not a dialogue.

[Manaa] Contrary to its usual practice, your movement was keen to point out, immediately after the meeting, that this was not held within the framework of the dialogue and that it did not mean any "convergence of viewpoints" or "backing for any argument" whatsoever. What is the idea behind such a demarcation?

[Nahnah] The last presidential elections generated a new political landscape through which I am obliged to respect the votes cast for me. We were therefore obliged to inform the citizens and the activists in our movement about the contents of this consultative meeting, particularly as this is the first meeting of its kind since the president of the Republic acquired his legitimacy.

[Manaa] The statement issued by your movement reflects a kind of reservation about the outcome of this meeting, but it does not elaborate. Can you be more specific?

[Nahnah] You are entitled to read into it what you like. As far as we are concerned, we have released this statement and we assume the responsibility and the consequences. This preliminary consultative meeting is, in our view, an introduction to further meetings which could stay at the level of consultations or could equally be part of a dialogue...

[Manaa] It seems that the issues you raised with the president are not mentioned in the statement.

[Nahnah] It was not necessary to give the details of this meeting. On the other hand, we had to outline the issues raised during this discussion, whether with regard to security matters, the citizen's sufferings, or with regard to the practical stages which followed these meetings.

Moreover, this meeting could be divided into two parts. The first part concerns the assessment the president of the Republic makes of the economic and political and security situation over which we have a divergent vision.

The second part concerns the practical measures and the proposals which the president intends to put forward to the people he is consulting and to public opinion. This issue is also open to discussion, and the duty of all self-respecting political parties is to express their viewpoints to enable the citizens to be aware of the facts of democratic work in this country.

[Manaa] Some are saying your movement is not in favor of a national conference...

[Nahnah] This conference will be doomed to failure if it is prepared haphazardly. If, on the other hand, this conference is held with the participation of the parties which could have an influence on the various sections of society and whose decisions would be guaranteed by Algerian society, then we are in favor. We have noticed that the conferences to which all and sundry were invited only diluted the vital issues which the people would not want to see treated lightly.

[Manaa] Do you think that all "those influential parties" have been involved in the current dialogue?

[Nahnah] If everyone has not been involved, the majority has been, at least. This could help lead to a larger consensus than the one reached at the previous conference for national consensus.

[Manaa] How do you see the efficiency or the credibility of such a conference?

[Nahnah] Its credibility will depend on the presence of the parties interested in a real solution to the crisis. The others, who are only interested in a deterioration of the situation, must, in our opinion, be pushed aside and will have to assume responsibility for their positions.

[Manaa] In which category would you put the dissolved Islamic Salvation Front [FIS]?

[Nahnah] This party has men who are capable of taking into account the national interest and the religious interest. Two years ago, we thought that a dialogue had to be held with the wise men of every political

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movement, particularly the dissolved FIS. Having said that, we believe the Algerian state is free to decide to whom it wants to talk and whom it wants to consult.

[Manaa] The revision of the law on parties is one of the items on the agenda of this dialogue. In this respect, there is persistent talk about the probable banning of religious parties, including HAMAS [Islamic Society Movement].

[Nahnah] We do not react to intentions but to tangible actions. Having said that, we believe that everything in this country is subject to revision except Islam and the Arabic language.

[Manaa] After the presidential elections, you talked about assurances from the authorities for holding a general election before the end of the year. It now seems that this date has been postponed to the first half of 1997. What is your comment?

[Nahnah] Our demand has not changed one iota. The people must be given the right to choose in order to be able to judge men and programs. Democratic logic demands that those who have received the people's trust must also trust the people. The fear of giving back to the people the right to choose is, in our view, tantamount to a humiliation equal to that endured by this same people in the past.

[Manaa] You have talked about an "assessment" made by the president of the Republic and which you do not seem to share. What is your own assessment of the country's situation?

[Nahnah] We are an opposition party. Therefore, we have a perception which evidently differs from that trumpeted by some media and by official and unofficial circles. The credibility of any self-respecting party comes essentially from its capacity to convey, faithfully, the underlying reality of its country. Any attempt to conceal the truth from a party leader, the president of the Republic, or from Algerian society is an injustice which common sense and correct political action do not allow.

[Manaa] You are still not giving us your own assessment of the situation.

[Nahnah] The situation is such that if we do not make up for it by giving back the right to choose to the people, it could get worse as the days go by, whether with regard to the security situation or the economic and social situation.

[Manaa] Do you think the solution lies first of all in holding a general election or, on the contrary, in holding a national conference?

[Nahnah] The solution lies in the liberation of democratic political work and removal of the obstacles affecting the media and the political class first. It also lies in giving back to the people the right to choose because the people are neither minor nor disabled. In this respect, we notice, with regret, that certain political circles within the regime and among the political formations want a trite democracy. Democracy is a whole.

We have always called for shura [Arabic word for "consultations"], or failing that, for democracy. Otherwise, let us have a "shuracracy" [concept advocated first by former President Ben Bella, calling for a religiously-motivated consultative council to govern the country]. In the absence of all this, we risk ending up with a "dictatocracy," which consists of a dictatorship disguised as a democratic regime.

[Manaa] What is your comment about the current situation in Lebanon?

[Nahnah] We would have liked to see the Algerian authorities, which rejected the Sant'Egidio meeting [of most Algerian opposition parties], do the same for Sharm al-Shaykh [antiterrorism summit in Egypt]. In this respect, we notice that the serious Zionist aggression received only routine statements and no active denunciation.

Egypt

Egypt: Musa Optimistic About Arab-Israeli Peace Talks

NC3004150796 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said today that the final Palestinian-Israeli negotiations will be held in Taba on Sunday [5 May]. He added: Commitment to holding the final talks on the scheduled date, the Israeli Labor Party's reversal of its opposition to the principle of establishing a Palestinian state, and the drafting of a new Palestinian charter are all indications that the two sides are serious. He said his talks with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat Monday evening were clearly optimistic. Therefore, Musa added, Egypt feels that things are now positive as regards the Palestinian-Israeli negotiating track.

Asked if the recent cease-fire agreement in Lebanon is a source of hope that the peace process on the other negotiating tracks will move ahead, the foreign minister said: The latest agreement in Lebanon is said to have been accompanied by an understanding that negotiations between Syria and Israel will be resumed and the peace process between Lebanon and Israel will be activated. If these reports are true, then there is hope that the peace

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process will be vitalized. This will be contrary to the atmosphere of tension that has prevailed in the region over the past few months.

Egypt Opens 'Contacts' With Israeli Likud Leader Netanyahu

MM3004132696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 30 Apr 96 p 5

[Report by Muhammad 'Allam: "Egypt Opens Contact Channel With Likud; Netanyahu Visit to Cairo in the Cards"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo — AL-HAYAH has learned from high-ranking Egyptian sources that there is "Egyptian discontent at the policies pursued by Shim'on Peres, Israeli prime minister and leader of the ruling Labor Party, since the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, held to salvage the peace process." His request to visit Cairo before the Israeli elections, scheduled for 29 May, is at a standstill as a result of the recent aggression against Lebanon and his failure to respond to Egypt's appeals to stop shelling civilians.

AL-HAYAH has learned that Cairo has opened a contact channel with the Likud. As is known, Jordan is the only Arab party which has opened a contact channel with Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu, who was received there last month.

The contacts were initiated through Egyptian Ambassador to Tel Aviv Muhammad Basyuni, who met with Netanyahu within the framework of ordinary meetings with leaders of the Israeli political parties, which are normally active before parliamentary elections. Basyuni sent reports to Cairo containing Netanyahu's views and position on the peace process, the negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, and the implementation of Israel's contractual commitments on the Palestinian track. The reports broached bilateral relations and regional cooperation.

Informed Egyptian sources told AL-HAYAH that "this is happening because Egypt does not want to be taken by surprise if the Likud leader becomes Israel's prime minister." However, the sources played down the importance of these contacts, saying that "they are aimed at exploring the personality of Israel's future prime minister and his policies...they are normal contacts with the various candidates running for this post, on the grounds that peace is between Egypt and Israel, not between Egypt and the Labor Party or the Likud."

On the possibility of the Likud leader's visiting Egypt, the sources ruled that out, at least before the elections, "unless Netanyahu asks to visit Cairo." [passage omitted]

Libya

Libya: North Korean Foreign Minister Arrives for Official Visit

LD3004214296 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1930 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kim Yong-Nam, member of the political bureau of the Central Committee of the [North] Korean Workers' Party, vice-premier of the executive council, and minister of foreign affairs in North Korea and his accompanying delegation arrived in Tripoli this evening on a visit to the Great Jamahiriyah. The brother secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation received him and his accompanying delegation.

He [Kim] gave a statement to JANA in which he expressed his and his accompanying delegation's pleasure in visiting the Great Jamahiriyah pointing out that his visit falls within the framework of consolidating and boosting bilateral relations between the two friendly states. In his statement he stressed his country's solidarity with and support for the Great Jamahiriyah against the unjust sanctions imposed on it by Western countries through the so-called [UN] Security Council. [passage omitted]

He added that during this visit they would discuss with their Libyan friends the means to enable an advance in relations. International issues of common interest would also be discussed.

Morocco

Morocco: Hassan Views Chirac's Arab Policy, Mideast Peace Process

BR3004114396 Paris LE FIGARO in French 29 Apr 96 p 4

[Interview with King Hassan II of Morocco by Franz-Olivier Giesbert; place and date not given: "Fundamentalism and Integration: The Truths of Hassan II"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Giesbert] Jacques Chirac intends to reaffirm France's presence. How do you assess his Arab policy?

[Hassan II] I note that it is shifting. It seemed to me that his Arab contacts were solid. I believe his action could be positive.

[Giesbert] Do you think that France can play a role in the Middle East once again?

[Hassan II] Yes, because Jacques Chirac has a sense of moderation. He knows that France is not a deus ex machina.

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[Giesbert] You entered the Middle Eastern peace process around 25 years ago...

[Hassan II] No. I did not enter into the peace process. I wanted peace, which is not the same thing.

[Giesbert] You would agree that you have served as something of a hub for the Arab world?

[Hassan II] Let us say that I was careful not to overindulge in advice because too much advice is always being given and the advice that is given is often bad.

[Giesbert] Do you fear for the peace process in the wake of Israel's raids against Hizballah and the Qana massacre?

[Hassan II] There is no real war going on and I deeply regret the fact that Tel Aviv has succumbed to this tragic illusion. The peace process has already been in danger for a long time. It is like a child, you know. It cannot be safe from mortal, infant diseases. A new danger has arisen since the murder of Prime Minister Rabin. There are times where the extremists — and I mean Arab and Jewish extremists — agree each other on achieving a given objective, Doctor Faust's contract with the Devil, even if it means tearing each other to pieces afterwards. That is where all believers, whether Muslim or Jewish, must turn toward God and raise their hands toward heaven, asking Him to save us. [passage omitted]

[Giesbert] Today just one country is fighting against the peace process, namely Iran. Do you think that it will succeed in preventing progress from being made?

[Hassan II] I do not want to condemn Iran. The Iranians are Muslims and you should not condemn those who say that the only God is Allah and his prophet. Moreover, they are not all fundamentalists calling for other people's blood — far from it.

Let us talk about the fundamentalists. It is true that there are a lot of them. If all the countries in the Middle East adopted the same moral, spiritual, and political attitude in their place, then I can assure you the Iranian hypothesis you mentioned would not be echoed at all. But there are gaps on that front and the fundamentalists are making the most of them.

[Giesbert] When everything has been settled in the Middle East, the question of Jerusalem will still remain. You are chairman of the Jerusalem Committee. How do you see the issue being resolved?

[Hassan II] Each time Palestinian, Muslim, Israeli, or Christian visitors ask me this question I always reply in the same way: "Please, be nice, agree with me only to raise this problem at the end of the peace process." If we want to be successful, there is no other course of action.

[Giesbert] Do you mean to say that the Jerusalem business is a bomb that could blow up, taking everything else with it?

[Hassan II] Precisely. I am not abandoning any of my beliefs about Jerusalem, but I think we can wait before we discuss it. You cannot build a roof on top of columns that are not yet dry and a cement that has not solidified when the foundations have not yet even been built. [passage omitted]

Morocco: Prime Minister Protests Algerian Attitude Over AMU

LD3004194996 Casablanca AL-SAHARA AL-MAGHRIBIYAH in Arabic 25 Apr 96 pp 1, 3

[Article by G. Guennouni: "Maghreban Credibility"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In a letter from Abdellatif Filali, [Moroccan] prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, to the Algerian foreign minister, Morocco asked Algeria, in its capacity as chair of the Arab Maghreb Union [AMU], to suspend the activities of the union's institutions until its [Algeria's] stance regarding our territorial integrity became clear, after having declared that it was a party to the conflict and starting to behave at international gatherings as though it was in a state of diplomatic war with Morocco. [passage omitted]

Instead of absorbing the significance of the Moroccan initiative and becoming aware of the dire consequences of attempting to exploit the union to achieve its domination and expansionist ambitions and impose its agenda, and in a blatant exercise to rally the union's other members against Morocco, Algeria rushed into submitting the [Moroccan] request to them in an effort to portray it as the party attempting to dismantle the union structure and obstruct the joint march. [passage omitted]

We urge the AMU Secretary General Mohamed Amamou, who has been calling for starting the unionist ball rolling in line with the aims of the Marrakech Accord, to persuade Algeria to refrain from opposing Morocco's right to its territorial integrity and to make it observe the articles and texts of the accord. He [Amamou] should have been the first to protest whenever, in any way, and by whomsoever the accord was undermined or breached.

The silence observed by the secretary general and some members of the union regarding Algeria's persistent attempts to undermine the unity of the Moroccan national territory by imposing an artificial and disuniting entity is contrary to the spirit of the Marrakech Union

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Charter. Consequently, this stance highlights the extent of the lack of credibility of all those who shout about the need to safeguard the historical gain — those who want to benefit from the fat and its price [to have their cake and eat it] — which is rejected and unacceptable. If they want the union and unity, then they must confront attempts to tear apart the union and plots to disunite it and create artificial entities and they must retaliate as a united front. On the other hand they might want an entity that responds to their whims, an entity that serves their interests and their selfish circumstantial tendencies; in which case they should stop that clamor which is not fooling anyone except those who are raising it. [passage omitted]

Morocco: Mining Ministry Announces Details of Gold Mine Deal

LD3004190796 Casablanca LE MATIN DU SAHARA in French 27 Apr 96 p 5

[Article: "Gold Mine Discovered Near Tiznit"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In a statement, the Ministry of Energy and Mines has announced that Abdellatif Guerraoui, minister of energy and mines, chaired a ceremony in Rabat last Thursday [25 April] marking the signing of an agreement between Le Bureau de Recherches et de Participation Minieres [BRPM] and the Omnium Nord Africain [ONA], a private group, for the development of the gold deposits discovered in the province of Tiznit.

These deposits were discovered by the BRPM after carrying out surveys which showed that the region was rich in gold reserves. [passage omitted]

Morocco: Minister Promises Pay Negotiations, Social Dialogue

LD3004225896 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Moroccan workers, like other workers in the world, will mark Labor Day tomorrow. On the occasion of 1 May, Amine Damnati, the minister of employment and social affairs, gave an address to the working class in which he talked about the result of efforts and prospects of gains, such as strengthening the social dialogue and plans to revise wages. In this context, the minister said:

[Begin Damnati recording] My brother and sister workers: Our country's entry to the new world economic order and the challenges imposed by that require from us all — government, employers, and workers — that we make more efforts to promote labor relations to a higher level of understanding, dominated by consultation and dialogue among all the parties involved in production. [passage omitted]

I would like to point out that on the basis of its awareness of the importance of social dialogue, the government is determined to firmly establish it as a culture and a method of resolving issues witnessed in the world of labor and finding realistic solutions for these issues within a framework of harmony and in line with the noble royal message addressed to the seminar entitled "Social Dialogue, Development, and Democracy" which was organized recently by the Consultative Council for Following Up the Social Dialogue.

Brother and sister workers: On this occasion, I have the pleasure to inform you that as an embodiment of the great care His Majesty King Hassan II accords to the working class, the government plans to revise wages in a way that will be in line with the aims represented in maintaining purchasing power, keeping the national economy competitive, and maintaining greater financial and economic balances.

Consultations on this issue with the relevant social and economic parties through responsible dialogue will start this month [May], with a view to reaching results at the earliest possible date. [end recording]

Morocco: Editorial Criticizes Ministry's Neglect of Social Dialogue

LD0105104996 Rabat AL-'ALAM in Arabic 27 Apr 96 p 1

[Editorial by A. Ghellab: "With the People — Why do Ministers Not Recognize Consultative Council for Social Dialogue"?]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Consultative Council for Social Dialogue held a seminar last week. The mere existence of this council should ensure that dialogue is a policy followed by all sections of society, particularly those that are linked by common interests, both work and employment interests.

In spite of the existence of this council and the number of issues that we heard were presented at the seminar and that the council had facilitated a dialogue process among those who lost the means for dialogue, the government, it seems, does not recognize this council or the principle on which it was based: holding a dialogue on the issue that could only be resolved by dialogue.

The strike by public sector health staff — doctors and nurses — is a serious issue because it concerns a sector that rarely resorts to a strike action unless the knife is really driven into the bone. The strike this social section

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has staged did not lead to any results and another strike is promised on 8 and 9 May.

It would have been natural if the Health Ministry resorted to dialogue before even thinking of a strike. If it did not do that, it should have thought of a dialogue after announcing its intention to stage a strike. However, it did not do that either. It should have thought of a dialogue after the first strike. Again it did not do that and the strikers went ahead and staged another strike and the ministry still has not thought of holding a dialogue to resolve the problems.

The Consultative Council has to intervene to save the health of society from the strike of those responsible for its health. The Consultative Council, however, only looks into issues that are presented to it.

So, let the grass-roots draft the law and let the issues of the health staff be presented to the council, either at their request or on a request submitted by the Health Ministry or by the whole government. Undoubtedly, his majesty the king will respond and will ask the council to discuss this thorny issue — which is not really thorny. However, the views of the council might succeed in solving a problem the Ministry of Health failed to resolve.

There are many issues that the ministers fail to resolve either because they are incapable of doing so or they do not want to do so, or holding a dialogue to seek a solution would put them in an embarrassing "position," i.e "their position" does not allow them to hold a dialogue with people who are beneath them in position...? [ellipsis as published] But in the end, who is the loser?

This question requires a long answer, but we summarize it by saying that the losers are in the following order: the people, the ministry, the strikers.

Why? Because of sheer narrow-mindedness.

Sudan

Sudan: Garang, Luk Sign Accord; SPLA Deputy Leader Views Accord

AB3004165096 London BBC World Service in English 1705 GMT 30 Apr 96

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] This month's peace deal between the southern Sudanese rebel leader Riak Machar and the government in Khartoum seems to have galvanized some other rebel factions into action, and today the SPLA [Sudanese People's Liberation Army] leader John Garang signed a unification agreement with John Luk of the South Sudan Independence Movement [SSIM]. At one stage all three men were members of the SPLA, but there has been a string of splits and defections over the last five years. John Garang's deputy, Mayadi Salva Kir, is currently in Nairobi and on the line Robin White asked him what he made of today's accord between John Garang and John Luke.

[Begin recording] [Kir] This one has to be taken very seriously because this will take the movement back to its stage before 1991, when it was a very strong movement before they split.

[White] So it's a kind of takeover really, isn't it?

[Kir] Well, you may call it that way if it is a takeover, but it is an agreement, and when people agree they become one person, or they do one thing, they become one organization. This is why it is going to be called SPLM [Sudanese People's Liberation Movement]-SPLA.

[White] Now, are you going to offer senior positions within the SPLA to people from SSIM.

[Kir] Well, in the declaration itself it is there in Chapter 4 that there will be a technical committee chaired by the chairmen of the movements to look into these aspects. I cannot declare it to you now on the media, but definitely the movement is going to do something for these people.

[White] So they will get senior political appointments and senior military appointments as well?

[Kir] Let us wait for the work of the committee and you will hear it yourself.

[White] You are a military man, would you be happy to share a command with somebody from SSIM?

[Kir] I will be very happy because before this most of them were with us and we were very comfortable with them. There will be no difference.

[White] One of the reasons why SSIM was born in the first place was because of complaints about the leadership of John Garang that he was too dictatorial, that he locked people up, that he even killed people within the movement. Do you think John Garang is a changed man now?

[Kir] That was the slogan of 1991 when Riak Machar and Lam Akol broke away and they accused Dr. John of so many things, but time proved that they were no better than that.

[White] Does he listen to criticism or is he a dictator?

[Kir] He has never refused to listen to any criticism. He has been listening to any advice given him by his subordinates.

[White] Does he listen to you or you just do what he tells you to do?

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[Kir] If he was not listening to me then I should not have worked with him all this time.

[White] So what is going to happen now with this merger? You know, what's the next step and how long will it take to announce new jobs and a new command structure? How long will all that take?

[Kir] Well, it will be very soon because we are facing a military challenge on the ground, so we hope to be through in a very short time.

[White] You know, in spite of this unity could you lose the war now?

[Kir] We cannot lose the war. Instead, we are going to win because we are going to be more stronger than we were. [end recording]

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Kuwait

Kuwait: French Frigate Expected 2 May for Joint Naval Exercises

LD3004163896 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1540 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait City, 30 Apr (KUNA) — The French embassy here has announced that the French frigate Commandant Bory will be arriving in Kuwait next Thursday [2 May] to participate in the naval exercises due to be held in the Arabian Gulf involving Kuwaiti, U.S., and French forces.

The embassy's statement added that these joint naval exercises will start next Sunday [5 May] under the codename "Eager Sentry 96-2." Their aim is to bolster cooperation between the forces of the three powers. [passage omitted]

Qatar

Qatar: Foreign Minister Meets U.S. Secretary of State

JN0105071296 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0610 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 1 May (WAKH) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher met with visiting Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani here last night. The QATARI NEWS AGENCY said that the talks dealt with the means of improving friendship and cooperation between the two countries. The two officials also discussed regional and international issues of mutual concern.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Receives Messages on Muslim Feast

LD3004204796 Riyadh SPA in English 2002 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jeddah, Apr 30 (SPA) — On the occasion of 'Id al-Adha, custodian of the two holy mosques King Fahd Bin-Abd-al-'Aziz al-Saud has received cables of congratulation and good wishes from President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan, President Mohamed Suharto of Indonesia, President Islam Karimov of Uzbekstan, President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani of Iran, President Liamine Zeroual of Algeria, President Captain [Lieutenant Colonel] Yaya Jammeh of Gambia, President Alpha Omar Konare of Mali, President Maaouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya of Mauritania, President Afwerki of Eritrea, President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso and President William Mkapa of Tanzania

The king replied with cables of thanks and appreciation and wished for the leaders constant good health and pleasure.

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Israel: Clinton, Peres Speak After Accord Signing

TA3004182896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1755 GMT 30 Apr 96

[News conference by President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres following the signing of the U.S.-Israel Counterterrorism Accord in Washington—live, in English]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted]

[Peres] I'd like to thank, from the depth of my heart, in the name of the people of Israel, the President, his delegation, his team, and him personally for, really, showing the deepest understanding that one can hope for, the immediate response whenever it is necessary, and the air of friendship that he has offered time and again over the last years.

I see the difference between the camp of terror and the free world. The camp of terror is operating under orders, is disciplined, is organized. The camp of freedom keeps its freedom. You cannot lead the camp of freedom unless you have a leader of great inspiration and outstanding capacity. In my own judgment, Bill Clinton has this great capacity to inspire the whole free world with his ideas, with his determination, with his capacity to distinguish what is right and what is wrong, what is immediate and what is long-range, what is support and what is response. I feel myself very lucky to see a person like him standing ahead and trying to lead the whole world to peace — and to peace for everybody, not just for us, the Israelis, but also for our neighbors; not just for the Middle East, not for Bosnia, Haiti, or other places. We are going and departing by the end of this century a history of bloodshed, and with Godspeed, let's hope that we are entering a different world of peace and understanding. [sentence as heard]

The President played a major role in bringing peace between us and the Jordanians, between us and the Palestinians. He and his secretary of state are now opening a new chapter — to bring peace between us, Syria, and Lebanon — that may be the last peace which is necessary in order to make the peace comprehensive and all-embracing.

Mr. President, I'm really.... [pauses] With a full heart of thanks, I would like to express both our admiration and gratefulness to you, to your administration, to the American Congress, to the American people. The world is a better place to live in with this sort of a policy and this sort of a leadership. Thank you very much.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, those agreements you're talking about that you'd like to have, by all accounts will require Israel giving up territory, a buffer zone. The help you got on this trip — antimissile help, counterterrorism help — will that make it easier for you to relinquish territory in order to get an agreement with Syria and with Lebanon?

[Peres] You're asking me?

[Correspondent] Yes, sir.

[Peres] We don't intend to remain in Lebanon anyway. We don't have any territorial ambitions concerning Lebanon, and on the first right occasion our army will be more than happy to leave the territory of Lebanon. We do recognize the international border between Lebanon and ourselves. If the Lebanese Government will take charge and the Lebanese Army will become the only armed authority in Lebanon and disarm all the other terroristic organizations, I see very little reason for us to remain in Lebanon.

[Correspondent] Yes, sir, but I asked you about Syria and Lebanon, and I asked you if the agreements that you have gotten here on this visit will ease your giving up territory — which you are committed to, anyhow, you know. Does it make it easier for you?

[Peres] Well, you are talking about territory, and I am talking peace. I mean, if it wouldn't be done what we were doing here, I am afraid that terror would win the day, and that would be the end of the peace process. [sentence as heard] We consider the last campaign as a campaign against peace.

Now to answer your question: We have announced that in order to attain peace, we are ready to make territorial compromise. Don't expect me now to lay the map on the table.

[Clinton] If I can just say one other thing related to this. This last agreement that was reached — and the first one in writing — to restore the cease-fire and to set up a monitoring mechanism that involves Israel and Lebanon and Syria, and involves France — it's been very active in this — and then has a larger consultative group that involves Russia and other countries — because this is in writing and because it gives us a chance to restore a normal life there, if this can be properly implemented, I think that it will be a good signal, or a good, if you will, test run to see whether other progress can be made. And I talked to the prime minister about this.

We're all very concerned about the civilians, the innocent people in northern Israel and all the people in southern Lebanon, who have lost their loved ones and who suffered great economic disruption. I think we have to implement this agreement faithfully and help the Lebanese to rebuild their infrastructure and restore the stability of their populations. And I appreciate what

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the prime minister has said to me about that. I wanted to thank you for that.

[Peres] I told the President that Israel will clearly respect religiously the understanding that was achieved by the secretary and his team upon the invitation of the President. Then I told the President that Israel will participate in the effort to restore the damages in Lebanon, together with the other nations, and we shall do so.

[Clinton] Thank you for....

[Correspondent, interrupting] Mr. President, [words indistinct] that you are betting on Mr. Peres as the next prime minister, and rightly so. Is that the case?

[Clinton] Let me say, first of all: In democracies we schedule elections, and that's a good thing. That reminds everybody that the people are in charge. But I think it was not only appropriate, it was virtually necessary for the prime minister to come here at this time in the wake of recent events, not only in Lebanon, but some of the developments in the relationship between Israel and the PLO. As I think all of you know, Mr. 'Arafat will be here in the next couple of days. So I think his trip here is entirely appropriate, and it was the right thing to do. The United States has always said that we did not interfere in the internal decisions of other countries, and that Israel and the United States are friends and allies, and will be, no matter who is elected. I hope that will also be the case, no matter who is elected in November in the United States. So, our policy on that has not changed and will not; it should not.

[Correspondent] Regarding the Russian elections. Elections have consequences, and you did not dispute that that election will have consequences for the relations between your government and whatever government is there. Is that not also true here, Sir?

[Clinton] Well, then, for the Russian people, and then it depends obviously on what happens afterward, that all elections have consequences [sentence as heard]. But the people who decide what the consequences are are the citizens of the country — in this case, the citizens of Israel. You know, they've shown pretty good judgment for quite a long while now, and I'm sure that the prime minister wants to join me in saying that they're in the driver's seat on that question, not me and no anyone else.

[Correspondent] [words indistinct] ...the last bombing campaign, so to speak, the bombings that occurred within the last weeks. In weeks since, there has been no — I hate to use the word — successful bombings in Israel. What would you attribute that to?

[Peres] To three things. To the conference in Sharm al-Shaykh that was initiated by the President and created a spirit of cooperation and understanding to work together in order to stop the acts of bombing and suicidal terror. The second is the more serious measures that Yasir 'Arafat has taken in Gaza and in the territories. I feel that he really started to fight terror, and I say it with appreciation. And the third is because Israel itself — maybe it's from our point of view the first thing — got herself organized to face this danger. I cannot say that we have a full-fledged answer to the problem, but we are by far much more organized and ready to prevent this sort of actions.

Israel: Further Details on Peres-Clinton Talks

TA0105091996

[FBIS Report] The Israeli press on 1 May reports extensively on Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' meeting with President Clinton at the White House on 30 April.

Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew, in a 1,500-word report on pages A1 and A12 by Aluf Ben and 'Aqiva Eldar in Washington, writes: "The U.S. Administration rejected Peres' request that the joint communique mention the possibility of setting up a defense pact between the two states in the future. The administration also rejected Israel's request to establish a joint committee that would discuss U.S. aid to Israel in the economic, energy, water, and immigrant absorption fields."

"Peres said that the Americans rejected the wording 'defense pact' because such an agreement requires congressional approval and that, therefore, they requested a less binding version. In a draft of the joint announcement, Israel also proposed that an agreement on strengthening strategic ties be signed this September, on the eve of the U.S. presidential elections. The administration rejected the proposal outright, making it clear in talks with Israeli officials that a meaningful defense accord can only be signed after peace is achieved between Israel and Syria."

The report states that Peres said he "wants Clinton to tell 'Arafat two things: To step up the war against terrorism, and to halt his negative remarks about Israel. Peres said, 'I told him that 'Arafat should replace his speech writer'."

In their meeting, Peres and Clinton "also discussed the Iranian threat and ways to persuade the European states 'to stress the criticism in their critical dialogue with Iran.' Peres attacked the Europeans for distributing documents denying Iran's involvement in terrorism."

In another report on page A12, Aluf Ben writes that prior to his meeting with Yasir 'Arafat in Washington

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on 30 April, "Peres said that Israel will abide by its commitment to free female Palestinian prisoners."

Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew carries a 600-word report by Hayim Shibi from Washington on page 19, citing Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir as saying at a briefing to correspondents on 30 April that "Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad is ready to renew the talks with Israel, and the United States will decide on the date." Shibi says that "Peres and Clinton agreed that the committee set up to monitor the cease-fire in Lebanon will be expanded to serve as a channel to achieve understandings on political and economic issues as well. This was the specific request of the U.S. President, who wants to see the establishment of mechanisms to hold an Israeli-Syrian dialogue. Peres said he held 'a fascinating discussion' with the President on how to convert the understanding reached with Syria and Lebanon into a lever and an opening for further options. It was clear that the Americans are trying to make the most out of the effort Christopher invested in setting up a monitoring mechanism and that they also do not oppose 'an accompanying French scent.'

"Peres said the meeting with President Clinton was 'a first-rate event in terms of openness, warmth, and content and in terms of the concept of continuing the peace process. Everything must be done to make sure the process is not destroyed, either by states or by gangs.'

"The two states decided yesterday to set up a series of committees. One of them: a follow-up committee on Iran, including Iranian attempts to present a false moderate image in Europe."

In an 800-word report on page 1 of Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English, Hillel Kuttler and David Makovsky write that "Peres also raised the issue of the release of Jonathan Pollard but would not reveal details." According to the report, Peres also said "he would be active in seeking to encourage the establishment of an international consortium on behalf of Lebanon, just as there is one on behalf of the Palestinians. However, he said Israel is nowhere near deciding how it would assist Lebanon."

Israel: Netanyahu Assails Clinton 'Engagement' in Peres' Campaign

TA3004122996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Binyamin Netanyahu says that if the Palestinian Authority honors the agreements, the Likud will keep up with the peace process. The Likud chairman criticized what he termed President Clinton's engagement in Peres' election campaign, adding that neither the king of Morocco nor Yasir 'Arafat will decide who the next Israeli prime minister will be.

Our correspondent 'Eran Liechtenstein reports that Netanyahu made these remarks during a meeting with 50 representatives of al-Tayyibah families who support his candidacy in the elections.

Israel: Press Views Peres Trip to U.S.

TA3004124996

[FBIS Report] In their 30 April editions, all Israeli papers continue to carry reports, editorials, and commentaries on Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' trip to the United States.

Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew in a report by Aluf Ben and 'Aqiva Eldar on pages A1 and A10 states that "Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and U.S. President Bill Clinton held their first hour-long working meeting at the White House on 28 April. The two men discussed the phrasing of their joint communique and a series of issues pertaining to the peace process:

"— Lebanon and Syria: It was agreed that efforts should and will be made to bolster Lebanon's independence, as a partner in the peace process. Peres said that in his opinion, the Beirut government was interested in rehabilitating the country. Clinton promised that the United States would help the reconstruction efforts and asked Israel to lend its assistance. Peres proposed that the international forum slated to be established to help Lebanon be linked to the peace process and the economic mechanism that Israel is proposing in order to support the arrangement with Syria.

"At their meeting, the leaders analyzed the prospects for negotiations with Syria, against the background of President Hafiz al-Asad's behavior. Peres: 'We discussed both the difficulties and prospects for reaching an agreement. The President intends to play a very active role in promoting the peace process.' Peres explained that no date had been set for the resumption of talks with Syria . He added that al-Asad had initially proposed resuming the talks prior to the elections but was now inclined to put them off until after the vote.

"— Iran: Peres discussed the European position which calls for a 'constructive dialogue' with Iran, and said that the EU denied that Iran was involved in terrorism, as opposed to U.S. and Israeli contentions. It was agreed that the U.S. and Israel would form a joint team of experts to examine evidence on Iran's terrorist activities and try to reach clear conclusions. Peres recalled that an Iranian or Hizballah terrorist squad had been arrested in France.

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"— France: The prime minister told Clinton that he would meet French President Jacques Chirac in Paris tomorrow. Peres said that France could help strengthen Lebanon's independence. Clinton replied that he was not opposed to France's participation in the process.

"— Russia: Clinton briefed Peres on his trip to Russia and mentioned the difficulties President Boris Yeltsin was facing. Peres told Clinton about the recent visit to Israel by Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov. Peres: 'Clinton constantly asks himself who could replace Yeltsin? That is real question for the everyone.'

"— The Arab states: Peres presented the difficulties that Operation Grapes of Wrath had caused in Jordanian public opinion, also noting the military operation's influence on Tunisia's decision to put off the opening of an Israeli interests office. Peres asked the United States to continue promoting normalization between Israel and the Arab world.

"Peres criticized Egypt yesterday, saying that although Israel had withdrawn from all Egyptian territory, Cairo had not established full peace with Israel."

Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew in a page 2 report by Ben Kaspit notes that "Peres revealed that he had discussed the issue of a defense agreement with President Clinton and agreed to promote the matter. 'The Arab states must realize,' the prime minister said, 'that such an option exists. And if there is no peace, Israel will have a defense agreement with the United States.'

"Peres explained that he and Clinton preferred the term 'defense agreement' rather than 'defense pact' because the latter requires congressional approval. It can take up to two years to get approval.

"Peres and Clinton discussed the continuation of the peace negotiations with Syria. Clinton voiced his intention to take a more active role in the contacts and agreed with the Israeli prime minister on the need for a summit between Peres and Syrian President al-Asad."

MA'ARIV adds that "Yesterday it was revealed that the United States sent Syria a letter noting the Syrian commitment to enforce the understandings reached after Operation Grapes of Wrath on Hizballah. A senior Israeli political source disclosed that the Americans insisted on putting the Syrian commitment in writing. The U.S. letter to the Syrians officially sums up this issue."

Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew in a report from New York by Arye Dayan on pages 1 and 2 says that "referring to the requests he presented in his meeting with U.S. President Clinton on 28 April, the prime minister said: 'We have reached a state of bankruptcy. We have nothing to ask for from the Americans. Everything we ask for we get.'

"Speaking to correspondents, Peres also revealed that Egyptian President Husni Mubarak sent a cable expressing appreciation for the way Operation Grapes of Wrath was concluded. Peres recounted that Mubarak's cable was couched in friendly terms and estimated that he may hold a meeting with the Egyptian president soon. 'The friendship between us and Egypt must be constantly maintained,' Peres asserted."

In another report on page 2 of DAVAR RISHON, Dvora Perl writes that when addressing the issue of a defense agreement between the United States and Israel, in an appearance at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Prime Minister Peres said that "there is no need to rush in implementing this idea." Peres pointed out one problem, noting that "a defense agreement means 'receiving and stationing soldiers,' and that Israel never wanted to have American troops fighting on its behalf. Even in the event of a defense pact, any U.S. personnel would have observer or monitoring status, much like on the Sinai Peninsula." DAVAR RISHON adds that, referring to a peace agreement between Israel and Syria, "a senior Israeli official told American commentators that there would be no real need for U.S. forces in any future arrangement with Syria. A token force of several hundred technicians and uniformed troops may be required, the source noted, but not a fighting force."

Israel: Angolan Foreign Minister Arrives on 'First-Ever Visit'

TA0105113696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Angolan Foreign Minister Bernardo de Miranda is currently visiting Israel on the first-ever visit by an Angolan minister. This morning he conferred with Foreign Minister Baraq in Jerusalem. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the Angolan minister asked Israel to help his country find land mines planted during the civil war. Thousands of Angolans have been hurt by these mines.

Israel: Peres—Hizballah Commando Arrested in Paris

LD3004154196 Paris France-2 Teletext in French 1155 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Shim'on Peres, the Israeli prime minister, said on Tuesday [30 April] that a commando of the Lebanese Hizballah was arrested in France as it was preparing an anti-Israeli attack.

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The Israeli prime minister made this statement to Israeli journalists while on his way from New York to Washington.

Tomorrow Shimon Peres will be in Paris, where he is expected to meet President Chirac.

Israel: Nigerian Envoy Vows Not To Allow Hizballah Camps

TA0105103396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Nigerian ambassador in Israel said that his government is not and will not allow Hizballah to keep training camps on its territory. The ambassador made these remarks in a meeting with Eytan Bentzur, the Foreign Ministry's assistant director general, in the wake of reports that a Hizballah base has been operating in Nigeria. Bentzur expressed concern about such a possibility. This is reported by our political correspondent Shlomo Raz.

Israel: Netanyahu—'Agreement Will Cause an Escalation of Violence'

BR3004141096 Barcelona LA VANGUARDIA in Spanish 28 Apr 96 p 3-4

["Exclusive" interview with Israeli Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu by Henrique Cymerman; place and date not given: "This Agreement Will Lead to More Violence" — first two paragraphs are LA VANGUARDIA introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem — Following several weeks of political cease-fire, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli conservative candidate for prime minister, has withdrawn his support for the actions of the Labor government: "Hizballah's pro-Iranian activists are still in their positions in Lebanon, they can still fire missiles against Galilee whenever they wish to, and as of now, our troops may come under attack in the southern Lebanon security zone, under the umbrella of a formal agreement," he stated in an exclusive interview granted to LA VANGUARDIA a few hours after the agreement with Lebanon was reached.

Netanyahu is seeking to win votes from the center by stating that "the agreements with the Palestinians are a fait accompli," applauding the Palestine National Council's decision to renounce the destruction of Israel, and — for the first time — not ruling out a personal meeting with Yasir 'Arafat.

[Cymerman] Peres managed not to bury his army in Lebanon, as happened other times in the past. However, is the balance sheet of the Grapes of Wrath operation completely negative?

[Netanyahu] Hizballah's Shiites can now attack the Tsahal (Israeli army — LA VANGUARDIA editor's note) forces and then flee to the refugee zones among the Lebanese civilian population. These are veritable sanctuaries which we helped create with this agreement. True, they cannot fire on us from the villages, but it is enough for them to move a few meters away, squeeze the trigger, and then run back to the villages. We cannot react. It is difficult to be optimistic about this provisional agreement. There is nothing any of us wants more than a lasting peace and tranquillity for northern Israel's inhabitants, and also for the Lebanese citizens on the other side of the border. However, that objective has not been reached.

[Cymerman] Does this agreement preserve Israel's right to self-defense?

[Netanyahu] This agreement will cause an escalation of violence. We will have to pursue them when they attack us, they will hide in the villages, and they will end by firing katyusha missiles on our towns, and then the whole situation will be back to square one.

[Cymerman] What would you have done differently if you were the prime minister and were conducting the negotiations with Lebanon and Syria?

[Netanyahu] I would do everything in my power to disarm Hizballah and obtain guarantees from Syria and Lebanon that the pro-Iranian forces are banned from southern Lebanon. That objective would lead to genuine peace. With Hizballah having the means to attack our soldiers and targets in northern Israel, it is only a question of time — and I am afraid not a very long time — before the vicious circle of violence is repeated. If I were the head of the government, I would have continued the operation until the end.

[Cymerman] The Labor prime minister believes that one of his great achievements is that, for the first time, there is now a written agreement with Lebanon, backed by Syria.

[Netanyahu] The agreement has another great shortcoming. Hizballah is not at any point required to stop its attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets throughout the world, like for example the attacks on the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires and on its Jewish community. Let us not forget that they are threatening to repeat this kind of attack and that Hizballah is an organization made up of fanatics who are prepared to do anything, who live by the sword. That is a "Hizblahblah" agreement, with a lot of hot air and media coverage, but which actually is bringing us back to the starting point.

[Cymerman] Up until now, in the name of national consensus, you have not spoken out against Shim'on

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Peres. What is your view of his role in this crisis, in his capacity as both prime minister and defense minister?

[Netanyahu] Mr. Peres enjoyed the support of the whole of northern Israel's population, who were prepared to suffer inside bunkers to see a new situation come about. He also had my personal and unconditional support, as head of the opposition, to achieve the operation's objectives. However, the prime minister did not withstand the pressure. Instead of pressuring Syria, he allowed Syria to pressure the Israeli Government. At this very moment, Mr. Hafiz al-Asad, the Syrian president, must be comfortably sitting in his armchair and rejoicing over this great victory, which is both a personal victory and a victory for his country. The agreement is a sham for peace and security, and what my government will attempt to achieve is genuine peace and security. We are not in southern Lebanon because we want something from that country. The only thing we are striving for is our security. This operation was launched to restore our security; I am afraid that Shim'on Peres has failed to achieve that objective.

Israel: IDF Reportedly Evacuates South Hebron Outpost

TA3004191296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hebron residents are saying that tonight IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers moved most of their equipment out of the IDF outpost at the Haruz junction in south Hebron. The residents told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that most of the equipment was loaded on trucks, following which several dozen soldiers departed. Only a few soldiers stayed behind to watch the outpost.

Israel: IDF Denies Reports of Evacuation of Hebron Outpost

TA0105045496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman denied that the army had evacuated an outpost in south Hebron. Equipment was removed from the outpost, but the IDF spokesman claims that routine activity continues in the place.

Our correspondent Gay Qotev reports that Jewish settlers in Hebron and Qiryat Arba' will stage acts of protest, such as a school strike, today against the IDF redeployment in the city.

Israel: Jewish Resident Stabbed in Hebron; Assailant Hunted

TA0105081296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There has been a terrorist attack in Hebron. A Jewish resident of Qiryat Arba' was knifed somewhere between the casbah and Gross Square. The victim is currently being taken to Hadassah-'En Kerem Hospital in Jerusalem. Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that army troops have been summoned to the site, and they are trying to catch the assailant.

Israel: Hebron Knifing Stirs Antiredeployment Fray; Mayor Comments

TA0105102796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Seventy-two-year-old Nisim Goday, a resident of Qiryat Arba' who was stabbed near the casbah in Hebron this morning, is currently undergoing surgery at Hadassah-'En Kerem Hospital. He is in serious condition. The assailant fled, and the security forces are hunting him down in Hebron. After the incident, some settlers overturned a few stalls in the casbah, and the police detained several shopowners for questioning.

Likud Knesset Member Ari'el Sharon arrived a short time ago at the scene of the attack in the Hebron casbah. He told our correspondent Gil Litman that Hebron should be granted autonomy but that the entire city should be considered Area B — that is, an area where the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is entitled to operate. Sharon added that the Jewish Quarter in Hebron should be annexed to Qiryat Arba'.

The leaders of the religious factions in the Knesset sent a letter to Prime Minister Peres saying they are unanimous in their opposition to the evacuation of Hebron. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the letter was signed by the leaders of the National Religious Party, SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim], and the United Torah Jewry.

Hundreds of settlers from Hebron and Qiryat Arba' are currently holding a demonstration opposite the Knesset in anticipation of the debate on the IDF's redeployment.

Hebron Mayor Mustafa al-Natshah denounced the stabbing, saying that the people behind it are trying to prevent the IDF redeployment. The mayor told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem that the Palestinians demand that the IDF withdraw from the city and noted that he has no doubt that the attacks will stop upon the arrival of the Palestinian Authority in Hebron.

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Israel: Baraq—'Nothing Terrible' if Hebron Redeployment Postponed

TA0105063296 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 1 May 96 p 3

[Report by Michal Yudelman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister and chairman of Prime Minister Shim'on Peres's election campaign Ehud Baraq said yesterday that "nothing terrible would happen if the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment in Hebron would be postponed until after the elections."

Speaking at a press briefing, Baraq stressed that Hebron is not being evacuated of its Jewish settlers. "The army's deployment there is being changed so that the Palestinian quarters are run by the Palestinians, while the IDF's presence is being tightened around the Jewish quarters. Not a single settler is being moved out. There is no cause for concern if all this takes place after the elections," he said.

Baraq said the date for the redeployment will be determined in a few days, according to the security considerations in this delicate period.

Baraq said the government will be judged by its achievements, reflected in the following three events: the results of Operation Grapes of Wrath; changing the Palestinian Covenant; and the package of military and diplomatic agreements signed with the United States.

He noted that the main goal of the diplomatic agreements is to reach international cooperation in the war against terrorism, the only real chance for defeating the terror organizations.

He added that "the results of Grapes of Wrath are intended as a lever to renew the political process and peace talks with Syria and Lebanon. The quietest times on the northern border until now were when we were engaged in talks with the Syrians."

Labor campaign sources said yesterday that the campaign staff does not intend to react to Likud leader MK [Knesset Member] Binyamin Netanyahu's attacks on Peres at the Likud's election kick-off rally on Monday [6 May].

"It is inappropriate for the prime minister, especially of Peres's standing and weight, to deal with Netanyahu. It would only raise Netanyahu to a level above his station," a campaign source said.

[Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew on 1 May in a page 10 report by Yo'av Limor writes that "most of the ministers support the IDF's redeployment in Hebron before the elections. The view in the cabinet is that Israel must fulfill its commitments, especially since the Palestinian Authority carried out its part in the accord and amended the clauses in the Palestinian Charter calling for Israel's destruction." According to MA'ARIV, "Baraq is the only minister opposed to redeployment before the elections," while "David Liba'i and Shim'on Shetrit are still undecided." All the others support an early withdrawal. The report quotes "a senior minister" as saying that "the IDF will start its evacuation of Hebron immediately upon the prime minister's return from abroad; for security reasons, the evacuation will be carried out in stages."]

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Jordan: Al-Kabariti Welcomes Cease-Fire; King's Comments Noted

MM2904132296 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 28 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Salamah Ni'mat: "Al-Kabariti Tells AL-HAYAH: We Support Any Efforts Aimed at Restoring Lebanon's Sovereignty in Full"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — Jordan yesterday welcomed the cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hizballah on the basis of an understanding among the parties concerned.

Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said that Jordan "welcomes the agreement reached to spare the blood of unarmed innocent civilians and end the serious military escalation." In a statement to AL-HAYAH he said that, apart from halting the bloodshed in Lebanon, the agreement "is a step toward resuming the peace process with Israel on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, in order to end the Israeli occupation of Arab land and achieve a comprehensive peace in the region."

The prime minister expressed his hope that the agreement "will be a motive to achieve tangible progress in the negotiations between Syria and Lebanon one the one hand and Israel on the other."

Al-Kabariti said that his country supported any efforts aimed at recovering Lebanon's sovereignty over all its territory through the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy.

King Husayn had made veiled criticisms of Syria which, he said, was the only party responsible for defending Lebanon and its people since it was "the party extending its protection over Lebanon." King Husayn also condemned the Israeli bombardment of Lebanon, which led to some 160 Lebanese civilians being killed, describing it as "criminal acts."

Jordan: Editorial Criticizes Clinton for 'Blind Support' of Israel

JN0105072996 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 1 May 96 p 6

[Editorial: "An Alarming Applaud"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It is U.S. President Bill Clinton's right to help Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres win the upcoming Israeli elections. But it is the responsibility of the White House chief as president of the country that is sponsoring the Arab-Israeli peace talks to show sensitivity to the feelings of all parties involved in the process and respect for the agreements which the United States helped reach among them. That is a responsibility to which Mr. Clinton seems to be giving little attention as he works to ensure that Mr. Peres remains at the helm of Israeli politics after the May 29 elections.

There was nothing surprising about Mr. Clinton's assertion in front of a Jewish lobby group of the U.S. unshakeable support for the Jewish state. After all, he is the U.S. president whom an Israeli newspaper dubbed as "the yes man who agreed to ... Peres' every request."

"It is unlikely that an American president (other than Mr. Clinton) would have defended Israeli shelling of a neighbouring state which led to so many deaths," wrote the Israeli paper YEDI'OT AHARONOT. Not quite. Many an American president defended Israeli acts which were condemned by the majority of the international community and many an American president provided unequivocal support for the Jewish state at times when such stands simply defied logic. The only difference is that Mr. Clinton has gone beyond what any of his predecessors did in his blind support for Israel.

The U.S. speaks of itself as a credible sponsor of the peace talks. But its actions belie its words. It was in the White House that Israel and the Palestinians signed the agreement which pledged that the future of occupied Jerusalem would be decided in the final status negotiations, that have yet to start. Mr. Clinton was witness to that agreement. But this legal and ethical U.S. obligation to the deal seems to be taken lightly, very lightly, by Mr. Clinton. His concern with pleasing Israel seems to be much stronger than his concern for U.S. obligations and the success of the peace process. This is the only explanation for Mr. Clinton's applaud when Mr. Peres announced this week that occupied Jerusalem will "remain the undivided capital" of Israel, in violation of Israel's commitment to the Palestinians in the Oslo deal which was signed in Washington.

A white House official rushed to explain that Mr. Clinton's behaviour came out of politeness, saying that the U.S. still believes that the future of Jerusalem should be decided in the final status negotiations. Not enough. Mr. Clinton's behaviour has serious implications. People in high offices usually calculate their moves. The president of the U.S. certainly does that. If it is true that his clapping for Peres' determination to violate the Oslo deal was a blunder and does not represent official U.S. policy, Mr. Clinton himself has to make that clear—that is, of course, if he really cares about the U.S. credibility and how the Arabs see him and his country.

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Jordan: 'Absolute U.S. Bias' Toward Israel Criticized

JN0105074996 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 1 May 96 p 1

[Editorial: "Security Is the Right of All"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Having finished Operation Grapes of Wrath and while the Lebanese people were preparing to bury the victims of the Qana massacre perpetrated by the Israeli Army against Lebanese civilians, Shim'on Peres, on a visit to Washington, heard the strongest words of support from President Bill Clinton. These words came after the U.S. Administration extended material and moral support to the Israeli Government that far exceeded any support given by previous U.S. Administrations.

The most remarkable thing in the speech of support Clinton volunteered to deliver is his reference to the inseparability of peace and security. We understand and acknowledge this fact and seek to entrench it. However, linkage between peace and guaranteeing Israel's security alone is something that can be conceived of only as part of the absolute U.S. bias toward the Israeli concept of the region's present and future. This totally contradicts the honest role to which the United States, as the sponsor of the peace process, committed itself at the Madrid conference.

It is a forgone conclusion that this bias — which many tend to interpret as mere electoral propaganda that has vexed even the Israeli opposition — is unacceptable. This is so because it is being shown by the head of a state that claims to be impartial in seeking to establish a permanent and just peace in the Middle East. The security of other states is as much of a requirement as Israel's security. Inevitably, disregarding others' quest to live in security and peace cannot serve the peace process or lead to the results that are sought by the peoples of the region.

It has always been clear that the United States is biased toward the Israeli concept and tries to implement the Torah vision of the region's future. However, the fact that this bias has reached this end — amid allegations that these positions are part of election preparations and that Peres, if reelected, will serve peace more than anybody else — makes it imperative that everyone examine this position thoroughly. Moreover, in the future, everyone should act in light of a clear perception of this distinguished commitment to the security of Israel, which is coupled with disregard to the security of others.

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Lebanon: SLA Posts Come Under Fire; SLA, Israelis Return Fire

NC3004125096 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1230 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Sujud and al-Ghizlan posts have come under fire but there were no casualties among the personnel manning the two posts. The personnel returned the fire with the support of the South Lebanese Army [SLA] and Israeli artillery.

Lebanon: Destruction of Buoys by Israel Violates Understanding

NC0105082696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0800 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a violation of the cease-fire understanding, fishermen in Tyre report that Israeli navy men aboard rubber dinghies this morning destroyed the buoys of three fishing nets opposite the al-Qulaylah coast south of Tyre. This caused the damage and loss of the fishing nets in the sea.

Lebanon: Nasrallah—Suicide Bombers Will Not Bring Retaliation

NC3004170596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1630 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, 30 Apr (MENA)—Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah said the party will not violate the April 1996 understanding because the understanding protects the civilians. He added: We are not obsessed with firing katyusha rockets. The party did not want this war because the war we want, which is exhausting our enemy, is the guerrilla warfare the resistance is waging inside the occupied security strip.

Nasrallah said that if a fedayeen blows himself up in an Israeli military convoy, killing and injuring dozens, the Israelis will have no right to react against the civilians in Lebanon, and this is an important achievement.

In press statements published today, Nasrallah stressed that there is nothing in the text of the understanding preventing fighting or resistance to liberate the territories.

He said there is ambiguity now about the work of the international observers committee and about its members. He added that no mechanism for the work of the international security committee has been laid down thus far. He expressed his belief that there will be more than one viewpoint as regards this committee's work.

Nasrallah voiced his satisfaction that the U.S. monopoly has been broken, and said that the French role will be balanced and could grow as it moves nearer to the Arab positions.

Nasrallah stressed that the party is ready to help the returning civilians, and this began when humanitarian aid was given to the steadfast citizens in the villages and houses in the south and western al-Biqa'.

Lebanon: Fadlallah on 'Resistance,' Israeli Attack

NC3004180096 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic 26 Apr 96 pp 6, 8

[Interview with Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, "spiritual leader of the Islamic Resistance," by Rajih al-Khuri on 25 April; place not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-Khuri] Fifteen days into the war against Lebanon, how do you assess the situation militarily, politically, economically, and socially?

[Fadlallah] Before delving into this in detail, we must focus on a vital point concerning the Lebanese state. The idea I still believe in, and with which I have found no contradiction so far, is that Lebanon is a special state, a venue for venting every political or security problem in the region.

Lebanon was forced to be the scene of every conflict created by others. They create conflicts in their own countries and push them to the Lebanese stage, because Lebanon sums up the reality of the Arab world, if not the reality of the whole region.

Hence, the question of a political settlement in the region, which strongly emerged after the Gulf war, was supposed to find reflection on the Lebanese stage when things go bad, and especially when the problem involves Israel. Hence, the bloody situation we are experiencing today is a way to vent for the suspension of negotiations between Israel and Syria, and for internal crises in the Zionist state. Here, we should also note plans to implement some of the Sharm al-Shaykh resolutions on combating so-called terrorism.

I believe what is required of this operation — and Lebanon is again the venue — is to break the backbone of the Islamic Resistance, under the pretext of protecting the security of the Israeli settlements, and to destroy the Lebanese economy, whose future prospects may give Lebanon an advanced economic base alongside the Israeli economy. What is also being sought is separation of Lebanon's political line from that of Syria and linking it, in some way in the future, with the Zionist political line. Thus, we find — realistically — that the Israeli-American plan has largely failed. The military situation of the resistance remains unchanged. Not a single missile launcher was destroyed in this mad war. The political situation is still cohesive; indeed, it grew even more cohesive, as reflected in the close link between Syria and Lebanon. This helped give Syria an

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advanced political position; it is as though Syria is now the term of reference for the region's major problem.

Despite all the successive blows to the economy, the economic situation remains stable. Lebanon — the state and the people — did not fell under military, political, or economic pressure. The way the people and the government contained the social problem, which was meant to dominate the political-security problem, shows that the Lebanese people present a special vitality in the region. They stand united in the face of any problem threatening their country. [passage omitted]

[Al-Khuri] All of us know the sensitivity of the Lebanese situation, after all the wars and tragedies, especially when we recall the experience of the Palestinian resistance in the south. How can you define the work of the resistance? Is it working to liberate the south or to rectify the peace settlement?

[Fadlallah] I think the resistance is not concerned with rectifying the peace issue. In the first place, and from an ideological point of view, the resistance does not believe in the peace settlement. It considers it a settlement in favor of Israel and the United States, not in favor of the Arabs or the Lebanese. The resistance is not that idealistic to believe that it can directly liberate the south with its own capabilities, but it can turn Israel's occupation of the south into a military, security, and political problem for Israel.

We know that Israel never suffered for its occupations as much as it did in its occupation of Lebanon. It never experienced any problem in the face of any other occupation, outside Palestine. The resistance men say that real occupation exists, and it seeks tame the political reality in Lebanon into accepting this occupation, because the Army does not possess the political or military capability to go to war with Israel. Thus, only popular resistance can shake this occupation. You could say that the price of resisting the occupation is very high, but what about the price of not resisting? Could we accept the continuation of the occupation without showing any objection or popular resistance to it? Either we have a resistance or we don't. To highlight the tragedies facing the Lebanese as a result of the resistance is to presume that there should not be a resistance. Either there is a resistance and we bear its results, which may come from the enemy's plan and not from the nature of the resistance movement [sentence as published] The question is: Do we relax and rest, allowing a large portion of our people to normalize ties with Israel, get used to this, and even broaden this normalization, so that Lebanon may become an Israeli protectorate under political occupation even after the military occupation is ended? [passage omitted]

[Al-Khuri] Based on what you have stated, I would like to ask a simple and direct question. Does the resistance make profit and loss calculations....

[Fadlallah, interrupting] The resistance possesses political awareness that enables it not to get absorbed with rockets and bullets, but in political reality, thus making calculations for every rocket and bullet it fires. Naturally, calculations are not always perfect. A human being may do wrong while meaning to do right. In the midst of all the exchanges by officials and nonofficials that the resistance embodies the conflicts of others in Lebanon and that it represents other regional and international calculations in an attempt to offset this or that regional or international policy, I would like to emphasize that this talk is meaningless. The resistance fighters are youths, but they are not desperate, failing, or poor. Many of them are the sons of the wealthy, and others are university graduates who possess cultural and political awareness. Thus, the issue here is that these people struggle like they pray. To them jihad is a prayer. It does not arise from a foggy, bewitching, or threatening state of affairs, by which one is meant to live in dreams of paradise, thus leaving behind this world and what is going on it because of this state of fogginess. There is an awareness of this world and an awareness of heaven, so much so that the resistance epitomizes the controversial status between heaven and earth, if I may say so.

[Al-Khuri] I do not want to discuss the utopianism of the resistance or its spiritual, intellectual, or philosophical dimension, for all this is clear and understood among all intellectuals and knowledgeable people in the country. But I would like to simply ask: If the resistance fires a katyusha at an Israeli enemy settlement in the Galilee and hits a house, the response to this katyusha could be the destruction of a village or part of a village. Does the resistance make this kind of calculation?

[Fadlallah] This is true on the face of it, but over a period of approximately three years the resistance discovered that the katyusha rockets have managed to provide safety for Lebanese civilians. Thus, it thinks that the firing of rockets, based on the reality of the Israeli question and the nature of circumstances, is supposed to stop Israel from striking at civilians. However, what is new is now is an Israeli-U.S. plan to use the question of katyushas as a gateway for movement against the Lebanese people.

I believe the experience of the past three years confirmed that the Resistance did not miscalculate in this balance between civilians in the settlements and civilians in Lebanon. But the elections in Israel needed a scapegoat and there is a U.S. plan requiring a boost to implement the Sharm al-Shaykh summit decisions. All

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of this has to do with the nature of the international situation; it is not linked with how the Resistance operations were proceeding.

[Al-Khuri] In the margin of the diplomatic efforts, what the United States, Israel, and France propose is this: A halt to the firing of "katyushas" to immediately end the war and destruction. Since diplomacy is active, why do we not stop the "katyushas" and so stop the barbaric destruction carried out by the enemy, something that could affect our steadfastness in future?

[Fadlallah] The resistance does not have any confidence that Israel will stop attacking Lebanon if it stops firing katyushas. On what is this talk based? We notice, for example, that if the katyushas are stopped — and it is natural that what is meant is to stop them, that is, not to fire a single rocket in the near or distant future and to unconditionally commit the Resistance fighters not to fire rockets — Israel will continue to besiege the south, the displaced persons will be kept away from their land, the political issue will remain bogged down, and the U.S.-Israeli pressure on Lebanon will continue. So the question that realistically poses itself is this: What is the guarantee and who will guarantee that Israel will clear this atmosphere it has created once the katyushas stop? We believe the issue of stopping the katyushas is a political one. Did the July [1993] agreement guarantee that Israel would not fire on the southerners? I confirm from a position of responsibility that the katyushas were a reaction, not the cause. So a declaration from Israel that it will not attack civilians will make the katyushas irrelevant, despite all these initiatives.

[Al-Khuri] Was this said aloud?

[Fadlallah] It was said aloud and was also whispered: There will be no katyushas if Israel pledges to stop attacking civilians and civilians return to their villages in safety and peace. The Resistance might think emotionally about Palestine, but it knows it is incapable of waging a war to liberate it. This issue is left to the Arab and Islamic world. But the Resistance considers itself part of the Lebanese people, who must resist the occupation to evict it. It considers itself responsible for civilians' security and freedom. I believe it has repeatedly stated that it is not monopolizing the resistance and that it is opening its arms to every Lebanese resistance move, moves affiliated with any religion and any political line. [passage omitted]

[Al-Khuri] How do you explain some people's open and declared call for linking any agreement on a solution with the Lebanese State?

[Fadlallah] We support this, because the Resistance will not think of putting its signature next to that of Israel's representative, because it does not recognize Israel. There was no need to raise this issue. The Resistance is not looking for glory by signing with Israel. The Resistance has told the State in private discussions and aloud that it will not be a security or political alternative for the State, that it backs the State's stand against the occupier, and that it is ready to coordinate with the State while maintaining freedom of movement for the Resistance. We do not understand what the Lebanese foreign minister means when he says there must be harmony between the Resistance and the State, because this harmony would embarrass the State, which has said through all its leaders that it does not want to adopt the Resistance. It says it is not fighting the Resistance, but is not talking about adopting it as an official Lebanese action. So we say it is important to maintain the dialogue between the State and the Resistance. But in light of its regional and international political position, it is not in the State's interest to appear as if it is in harmony with the Resistance and to let it seem that the Resistance is acting after consulting with the State, because this would quite clearly make the State responsible for Resistance actions, a responsibility the State cannot shoulder. There is no reason to raise this issue so forcefully that it will make the people support the State. The issue was never raised in the first place.

We believe that the resistance's political line has been incorporated in the state, and has turned into a political party and movement that can address any government official. Therefore, if some people fear this reality, they would be better served not to fear it and instead bear in mind the only real source of fear. I mean the intricate Israeli game, which may exploit certain words to create problems for the people, even if those who reiterate such words may not want these problems.

[Al-Khuri] Don't you believe that the practical translation of the issue goes beyond the signing to a solution. In other words, Christopher is trying to place water in the middle of the fire, that is, he is looking for a solution that allows the Israeli occupation while Damascus, Lebanon, and the resistance insist on maintaining the resistance?

[Fadlallah] Now that we have begun to enter the political part of the issue, we must realize that the resistance is not alone in this controversy. There is Syria and Lebanon, which is coordinating with Syria on the political level, particularly regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. The resistance alone does not represent a party but a part of the party. We believe that this Syrian-Lebanese party will not politically allow the resistance to be frozen or its freedom be diminished. The resistance may face some restrictions regarding the "July understanding" or some mechanisms in the

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guarantees. It may face some problems, but I believe that the resistance will not lose its freedom. I believe that when the negotiators decide and sign an emphasis of the "July understanding" where the resistance is maintained, the resistance will consider itself emerging victorious in this war, and so will the Lebanese civilians. This is because when a party bears great pains at a certain stage in order to prevent greater pains in a future stage, it will exact a great price for these pains. We do not want those who think in terms of politics and humanity to be preoccupied by these pains at this stage. They must think of the price we will pay for these pains, and whether it will mean the elimination of the occupation or the resistance.

[Al-Khuri] Suppose Israel will withdraw from the south some time in the future. What would be the fate of the resistance then?

[Fadlallah] It is not political, or a source of strength, to talk of what one will eventually do. However, the resistance said that when the Israelis withdraw, it would consider that it achieved its goal — the removal of occupation from Lebanon. As for what happens afterwards, the resistance has the political awareness to know the realities and what looms in the horizon. The resistance will not be a problem for its people, but will try to be a solution to the problems of all people. The resistance is not an absolute adventure, but one confronting the enemy. We know that every war is a risk, but the resistance will not embark on political risks.

[Al-Khuri] But you already said in an interview last year that the liberation of the south would achieve the goal of the resistance, but this would not mean that this liberation would necessarily stop the resistance action, because it constitutes the future horizon for the liberation of Palestine?

[Fadlallah] I was talking of strategy in the Arab-Islamic state of affairs, in the sense that one does not close his eyes and stop thinking about future resistance. I ask any people if when occupiers withdraw from their land, would they declare that they would absolutely stop resisting? They may stop resistance within a certain circle, and not another. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Hizballah Leader Says 'We Are Ready To Make Peace'

MS3004101896 London THE TIMES in English 30 Apr 96 p 11

[Report on interview with Shaykh Khadr Nur-al-Din, member of Hizballah Central Committee, by Michael Dynes; place and date not given: "Hizballah Offers Israel Lasting Peace Option"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut — Lebanon's Islamic militants made an unprecedented offer yesterday to recognise Israel in exchange for a comprehensive withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied zone in the south of their country.

The lingering threat of renewed rocket assaults on Israel's northern borders could be removed permanently if Israel dismantled its illegal 20-mile "security zone" in southern Lebanon, Shaykh Khadr Nur-al-Din, a senior member of Hizballah said.

Speaking at Hizballah's headquarters in Beirut's southern suburbs, Shaykh Nur-al-Din said: "We are not ready to forget what Israel has done to us, but we are realists. We are an occupied country and we want our land back. We are ready to make peace."

The shaykh, a member of Hizballah's 11-member central committee, said: "The West brands us as terrorists. We are not. We merely want to live with dignity in our own land. We have only used our Katyusha rockets in the fight for the release of the occupied area. We do not want to displace the Jews."

The West had demonised Hizballah in an attempt to discredit it, he added. "We are human beings just like you. We have wives and children. But we are prepared to die for our beliefs."

Lebanon's Christian communities still fear that Hizballah's long-term goal is the creation of an Islamic state. Shaykh Nur-al-Din says that his party has no such objective. Hizballah, however, is determined to enter the mainstream of Lebanese politics, he said.

The shaykh refused to be drawn on how long Hizballah was prepared to adhere to the terms of last week's American-brokered ceasefire. But the implication was clear: without the removal of Israeli troops from Lebanese soil, the resumption of hostilities was simply a question of time.

He denied that Hizballah was controlled by Iran or Syria. "We are a Lebanese party. Our fighters are fighting for Lebanon," he said. He also denied that Hizballah's Katyushas were supplied by Tehran and Damascus. "Lebanon is an arms market. We can buy what we want here."

Hizballah's conciliatory gesture coincided with the return of the estimated 400,000 refugees who fled southern Lebanon in the wake of Israel's Operation Grapes of Wrath, designed to flush Hizballah fighters out of that part of the country.

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Many are returning to towns and villages where houses, utilities and roads have been damaged or destroyed by the 24,000 rounds of artillery fired by Israeli troops during the two-week offensive. Western construction experts calculate that the attacks resulted in about 331 million pounds of damage.

The Israeli offensive produced a flood of volunteers eager to join the ranks of Hizballah's estimated 3,000 fighters, especially among the rural southern poor.

Lebanon: Hizballah Sees 'Positive Return' From Israeli Attacks

MM0105100096 London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 28 Apr-4 May 96 p 11

[Report by Fadi al-Ghawsh: "Leading Hizballah Figure Tells AL-MAJALLAH: Return of Israeli Aggression Positive"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut — In his assessment of the results of two weeks of continued Israeli attacks on Lebanon with a view to stopping Hizballah's shelling of northern Israel, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri said that the attacks have inflicted losses on Israel and achieved a victory for and "further strengthened" Hizballah.

This has been confirmed to AL-MAJALLAH by Shaykh Khadr Nur-al-Din, a member of Hizballah's Political Council. He said: The party's losses are limited to five martyrs (through last Monday). And despite its brutality and advanced war machine, the aggression failed to destroy any Katyusha rocket pads. He added: There has been a positive return for us from the Israeli aggression in the form of sympathy and support for the resistance and material support from all groups in Lebanese society.

On Hizballah's future plan he said: Our resistance will continue as long as our land is still occupied. If we are now using Katyusha rockets, the objective is to deter the Israeli aggression lest it continue to threaten civilians and damage their property. That is, our use of the Katyusha rockets is an exceptional measure, because our sharper weapon is planting explosives and setting up ambushes, in addition to suicide operations within the occupied area; that is all. Our plan is to liberate the land.

Lebanon: Al-Hirawi Returns to Beirut From Paris 30 Apr

NC3004170096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Ilyas al-Hirawi arrived at Beirut airport at 1800 [1500 GMT] today from Paris where he met with French President Jacques Chirac at the Elysee Palace. He arrived in Paris from Boston, where he underwent successful surgery. On arrival at Beirut airport, he made a statement to well-wishers. He said: I spoke at the UN General Assembly in the name of all Lebanese. This is the first time since the fighting began that a Lebanese official has gone to the United Nations to deliver a speech. [passage omitted]

In remarks to journalists upon leaving the Elysee Palace, al-Hirawi said that Lebanon wants peace and that he met today with President Chirac to thank France, on behalf of Lebanon, for its efforts to bring about a cease-fire in south Lebanon and for all the types of aid it offered, particularly in the sphere of the electricity. Al-Hirawi said: We want UN Security Council Resolution 425 to be implemented, in order to recover our occupied territory in the south. He said he delivered his speech at the UN General Assembly on behalf of all the Lebanese, whose unity was made manifest as never before. [passage omitted]

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Syria: Press on Peres' Washington Talks, 'Permanent Solution'

JN0105063296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 1 May 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary headlined "The Peoples' Will Is the Strongest," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH discusses the official and popular Lebanese participation in the martyrs' funerals in Qana.

AL-THAWRAH says: Although Qana is a small town, there was enough room for the whole world's denunciation and condemnation of this hideous crime. The town also turned into an international trial for Israel, which showed the whole world its aggressiveness, racism, and rancor, and hostility to the peace it falsely claims, especially after the bloody massacre exposed its lies and falsehoods. These lies were refuted by the blood of children, women, and innocent people in grieving southern Lebanon.

AL-THAWRAH says: Although it damaged the Lebanese economic infrastructure and inflicted human losses, this spiteful aggression showed the Lebanese people's strength, Arab will, adherence to their rights and land, and mighty steadfastness in the face of aggression. The Lebanese people were armed only with their faith, will, resolution, national willpower, and their honorable cause.

AL-THAWRAH notes: At a time when the world is unanimously denouncing this criminal aggression, sharing Lebanon's sorrows over this ordeal, and emphasizing the need to implement UN Security Council Resolution 425 and the need to resume the peace talks, especially since it is the only way to security and stability in the region — at this particular time, Shim'on Peres, the terrorist of the Qana massacre, is holding military talks in Washington. The main objective of these talks is to bolster Israel's military alliance with the United States and to obtain the most sophisticated weapons in the U.S. arsenal.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: Syria reiterated yesterday that it has a common destiny with fraternal Lebanon. It also expressed its concern about Lebanon, its unity, and independence, as well as its ongoing support for it. Syria will continue to be faithful to this fateful stand, to the firm links between the Syrian and Lebanese stands, and to joint action to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. The war machine can destroy institutions and houses, kill and displace men, women, and children, but it surely cannot kill the people's will.

In another commentary on the same subject, AL-THAWRAH says: The new understanding guarantees Lebanon's right to resist the Israeli occupation of its territory. The clauses of this understanding stipulate that it cannot serve as an alternative to a permanent solution.

The paper adds: This is a clear proof of the victory of Lebanon's will and its right to resist the occupation, as well as the triumph of the will of peace and the defeat of the objectives of aggression. Saying that the understanding is not an alternative to a permanent solution proves that the permanent solution can only be achieved through a just and comprehensive peace that is based on full Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the Golan, in implementation of the resolutions of the international legitimacy.

The paper adds: Perhaps, Israel, which did not learn lessons from its previous failed aggressions, will learn from its recent aggression and realize that the only option for real stability and security in the region is a peace that ends the Israeli occupation and restores rights to their owners.

Syria: Commentary—U.S. 'Money,' 'Ammunition' Do Not Bring Peace

JN3004190296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1139 GMT 30 Apr 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Shim'on Peres is currently on a visit to the United States. The U.S. President received him twice. The doors of the Pentagon were open wide for him and so were the doors of the U.S. Treasury. The money collected from the U.S. taxpayer, who is pestered by the illusion of Israel's blood-stained friendship and democracy, is at Peres' disposal.

Regardless of the U.S. generosity toward Israel, we wonder: What if Israel gains supremacy over all the Arabs combined? What if Israel becomes richer than the Arab countries? Is it not true that just before 1973 Israel gained supremacy over the Arabs? Were not billions of U.S. dollars and material aid pumped into Israel? Was its arsenal not provided with sophisticated tools of killing and destruction? Did Israel not have an edge over all the Arabs combined when it invaded southern Lebanon in 1982 and acquired more weapons and money because of this invasion just as it is doing now? Did Israel not have an edge over all the Arabs combined when it attacked Lebanon recently?

The Arabs have never been united against Israel. Indeed, some supported it in one way or another. Now the stand toward Israel is lukewarm. Despite this, Israel has not won any of its battles since 1973. In fact, Israel only added new names and descriptions to its record

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of terrorism. The massacre in Qana is added to the massacres in Sabra and Shatila, al-Ibrahimi Mosque, Bahr al-Baqar, and Dayr Yasin, and other crimes during Israel's short history in the region.

Despite all this, the doors of the Pentagon were opened again and Peres chose what he pleased of the weapons of mass destruction and other weapons. He thinks his ammunition and this world's money make Israel secure while it usurps territories, denies rights, perpetrates massacres, ignores international legitimacy and the international community's resolutions, and obtains more weapons of various kinds.

Injecting Israel with doses of sophisticated weapons and new blood does not dispel its feeling of insecurity and does not fortify the region against the effects of tension resulting from oppression. Moreover, it does not provide Israel with stability as a just and comprehensive peace would with a minimum expense for the U.S. and the world.

Realizing a just and comprehensive peace and submission to the will of the international community is a basic guarantee that comes before the ammunition and money Peres collects from Washington. Responsibility does not lie with the tool, with the tension resulting from giving Israel more weapons, but lies with the tool and the means, together with the source of their strength. [sentence as heard]

The road to a just and comprehensive peace as well as the honesty and neutrality of the U.S. role conflict with what is going on in Washington, especially in the Pentagon. Israel does not need weapons as much as it needs peace and it does not need money as much as it needs to recognize other people's rights and provide the means to coexist with them. This is what Washington should have done to guarantee a just peace that brings security and stability to the region and supports international security and peace.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Government Forces Reportedly Register Gains Against Taleban

LD3004183296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports received from Afghanistan say that the fighting between the Taleban group and government forces has shifted from Ghowr Province to Herat, [Province].

Quoting a BAKHTAR source our correspondent reported from Kabul that in a battle the forces supporting the government of Borhanoddin Rabbani have managed to spread the fighting to Herat, Velayt-e Province and to center the fighting in Pashtun Zarghun district, a district neighboring Herat, Velayt-e City.

In confirming this report, another government source said today that the Taleban forces were thrown out of Pashtun Zarghun district last Sunday [28 April] and the forces supporting the government of Rabbani have entered the district.

Regarding the situation in Saghar and Tulak districts, Ghowr Province, the source said that fighting was going on in these areas. At present Saghar is under the control of government supporters and Tolak is controlled by the Taleban group. The Taleban group refused to comment about this report.

Afghanistan: Taleban Attacks Rebuffed in West, South Kabul

LD3004191596 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An attack launched in the early hours of last night [29-30 April] from both west and south of Kabul was defeated.

BAKHTAR reported that last night Islamic Army forces defeated an attack by Benazir Bhutto's Taleban launched from the directions of Maydan Shar, Resh Khvor, and Sang-e Naweshta, imposing heavy losses on the invaders.

Accurate artillery fire during the course of this attack inflicted further loss on the invaders.

The Taleban sustained heavy material losses, including three infantry combat vehicles, seven strong positions, and the destruction of several heavy weapons, as well as loss of life, in this unsuccessful attack, which was launched in the early hours of last night. The Taleban group then retaliated for their defeat by firing rockets into residential areas of Kabul City. A barrage of rockets were fired on residential areas in the 6th, 7th and 8th wards of the city, injuring five citizens. Several private houses were also partially damaged.

India

India: Prime Minister Interviewed on Current Issues

BK3004154296 Delhi THE ASIAN AGE in English 27 Apr 96 p 8

["Interview of the Week" with Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao by M.J. Akbar in "his drawing room"; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The campaign season is not the easiest of times for politicians; for Prime Ministers, who have to harvest what they have sown during their time in power, the tension can be formidable. Observers often mistake the cool demeanour of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao for unconcern; but the weight of responsibility, and the burden of the stakes involved, was clearly visible on his normally unflappable features as he sat in his drawing room for a conversation with M.J. AKBAR. The range of subjects extended beyond politics, as Mr Rao looked back into his formative years for clues to his philosophy, his nature, his values, his beliefs, giving the interview much greater depth than a normal dialogue would involve. He ended on a note of confidence, and then left for another election meeting, this time to Nanded, to ensure that this confidence was not misplaced.

[Akbar] Before we begin, one cannot help but recall this particular time exactly five years ago when you had decided to retire and spend the next five years as a writer rather than as a Prime Minister...

[Rao] I had not decided what to do. I had decided what not to do, and that was to contest the elections and remain in Parliament, and whatever else goes with it... that was definitely ruled out. I am not a person who does nothing, so maybe I would have thought of doing something.

[Akbar] What did you feel when extracts from your novel were published?

[Rao] That was really a kind of hitting below the belt. The book has been badly misrepresented, distorted... so until the whole book comes out people will not be able to understand what I have to say. The time will come, or maybe the time will not come... it does not always happen that in the first place what you want to say is worth saying. Even if it is worth saying, it is not always possible to (publish it). Sometimes circumstances may allow... sometimes circumstances may not allow. The worst thing is that someone takes a few lines and puts

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them up as representing the book... that is the worst kind of slander that any author can go through.

[Akbar] Some of the gratuitous advice from your colleagues on the book could not have helped.

[Rao] (Short laugh).

[Akbar] Did you ever believe that you would become Prime Minister one day?

[Rao] No, there was no question of me believing that I will become Prime Minister, I never thought about it, it never crossed my mind... I was on the way out, I was more or less getting myself out of this active political life. I was thinking of something else, whatever it may be but not this. So where is the question of becoming Prime Minister, there is no other field of activity which can make one the Prime Minister, and I was going away from it.

[Akbar] There is this story that an astrologer said that you would be the number one...

[Rao] Let me assure you, I have done nothing on the advice of astrologers. I don't want to insult or hurt anyone, there are lots of people, lots of my friends who have their favourite astrologers and along with them they bring astrologers. I have no way of saying no to them, I listen to them, but throughout my life I have not done a single thing purely on the basis of an astrologer's advice. This is very difficult to believe since I'm found in the company of these people all the time, but one is in the company of so many others also, without being influenced by them and that's what life is. If you are influenced by anyone around you then you are not worth your salt. Particularly when you are holding a position of this kind.

Do you believe in havans?

[Rao] No... It is not a question of belief. I don't do any havan, I don't do any of these religious ceremonies which people regularly do. I go to temples, and when I go, there is a worship scheduled there which one goes through. Anyone who visits a temple goes through it, particularly if he happens to be an important person, some puja in his name or things like that, I of course do that. But beyond that I'm not particularly interested or I'm not particularly keen on getting some special pujas done. Still, I see people get them done. I do not say that they are not done. Sometimes I know about it — I know the people who are doing it, but again it is a question of not hurting their feelings, not stopping them from doing it, because they feel, as my well-wishers, that what they are doing is good for me, will be good for me. I have no way of asking them not to. This is how it happens. And from this you draw your conclusions.

[Akbar] But it is such a public perception that links you with Chandraswami.

[Rao] (Laughs). I don't think that this has to link me with any single person. There are thousands of temples in this country, and I have visited hundreds of them, so it doesn't really, necessarily point to any one person. I know so many people, and so many people know me, like all the Shankaracharyas. I have been a minister for temples, minister for religious endowments for more than two years. So in that capacity, because temples are a state subject, I may have visited many temples, and met thousands of people, not only in the state but outside also. The religious side is not alien to me. I have studied some of these things. Whatever I have studied will naturally remain with me, about the religion to which I belong. This is why you find all these reflections in me. But, I'm not fanatically (ritualistic), not particular about ceremonies, rites etc. I have never involved myself in these.

[Akbar] But what about people who misuse their "god man" status, and exploit their proximity to power.

[Rao] The point is, anyone can misuse proximity to power. For instance, someone I have not met more than once or twice in my life can claim to be a close friend of mine from college days. But I can't stop it. These are individual methods of unscrupulous people who would make use of any proximity, real or imagined, to people in power for their aggrandisement. You find these kinds of people, but I don't see why we should be so (interested) in only these kinds of people.

There are so many other people. I think on the whole, one's faith in human nature is based on the large chunk of humanity, the millions of people in whom you find nothing but good. They are much more inspiring.

[Akbar] They may be, but unfortunately they don't make news.

[Rao] So ultimately, it is the newsman who has to decide what is news. And we have to be cut to size to fit his scheme of things. So it is not me, it is you who makes whatever images, whatever figures you want to, naturally according to what you think will be readable. Finally it involves so many people, it goes round and round.

[Akbar] Would you say that journalists are as unscrupulous as godmen ?

[Rao] No, I don't say anyone is scrupulous or unscrupulous. The point is, we have all kinds of people. All professions have their own compulsions. There is nothing more to be said than that.

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[Akbar] You go to temples because you are a believer. Why do you go to a Muslim saint's dargah?

[Rao] Because I am a believer. The point is, that in the old Hyderabad state where I was born our life in the villages had no distinction at all. Unbelievable but true: In our village we made no distinction about Hindu or Muslim or Sikh. That is one of the things I have touched in my book... that is something which I consider as a treasure from my early life. I was telling some friends just now, in the town where I was educated there was a plague and we had to change our house, to that part of the town which was less congested. It so happened that at a distance of 50 yards from our new house there was a gurdwara. All of us children were always playing around the gurdwara; there were trees and we would climb the trees and come down. Prasad used to be given at the gurdwara, and everybody, without distinction, without caste and creed, enjoyed it. Children knew exactly when it was given. Somehow life has been always like that. God is there for everybody; I show the same reverence for a gurdwara or a dargah as a temple. All these things when a politician says, now, nobody believes it. They think it is all made up. So I don't talk about these things. Instead of exciting the disbelief of others in this atmosphere of super cynicism, I keep quiet.

[Akbar] But that was the formative part of your life.

[Rao] Absolutely. When I think of it I get inspiration, within myself. But those days were 60 and more years ago. But those are the images that last with me.

[Akbar] But how have your enemies — or perhaps opponents, since enemies is too strong a word for use in politics — managed to portray you as a communal person?

[Rao] It should be through a great skill of distortion. I don't know how they have done it. Or whether they have done it... it's a moot question... Here, almost at the fag end of a journey, when there is another test, another election to be gone through.

[Akbar] Do you think it has been a bit of a crime in the liberal culture exemplified by Nehru to be considered a practising Hindu?

[Rao] It is possible that some people have got that impression, but it is not right, it doesn't really arise from Panditji's liberalism. Nobody can say that anything he wrote is against religion, or what this country stands for. He has given such a vivid picture of India, of its civilisation: only a great scholar or a person who has thought through all those things could have said so. In order to understand him, apart from his speeches, one should also go through Discovery of India and other things he wrote. Great men are generally half understood or half-misunderstood.

[Akbar] This concept of secularism as non-religion has now become an issue.

[Rao] It's not so much the liberal thought of Jawaharlal Nehru but, if I may say so, Leftist thought is more responsible for this than liberal thought. I remember, in the initial stages, some parties ridiculing people who believed in religion. Their "thought-domination" or "talk domination" led to some people saying that they don't believe in God, but the next day he would be in a temple. I have several Communist friends; we grew up together, we fiercely fought each other but still remained friends — that kind of thing. There was a time when they converted the mangal sutra into a sign of slavery: thousands of women threw away their mangal sutras. In Andhra there has always been instant response to anything new. Once, lots of persons thought that the wisest person was M.N. Roy: in that area, if anything new attracts people, they don't hesitate.

[Akbar] To get to a slightly more political agenda. Two persons, in 1991, could have come in the way of your becoming Prime Minister. First, Ms Sonia Gandhi. You remember that Mr Sitaram Kesri laid his cap at her feet and asked her to take over and save the nation. Did you agree with that sort of thing?

[Rao] Do you mean did I know about it? No, I did not know about it. I only know that we had passed a resolution inviting her to take up the Congress presidentship. Later, on the same day I think, she politely declined. Then I was elected president. This I remember.

[Akbar] Do you think it was right of Mr Kesri to make such a gesture?

[Rao] This is speculation... after five years...

[Akbar] The reason I ask is because your opponents in the Congress have always used Ms Sonia Gandhi as a kind of threat against you all the time.

[Rao] I have been straight in everything. I have been doing my duty. There are people who might not find that adequate, who find fault-these things are part of life. If people say so, I don't know why they do it. If I find some truth in what they say I mend myself quietly, without making a fuss. This has been my nature.

[Akbar] You made a very interesting statement the other day: you said that the Nehru-Gandhi family knew that it would not be in politics forever. Given that this is the first general election in which the family is not contesting, do you think that one long era is over in Indian politics?

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[Rao] I don't agree with the idea of dividing eras on the basis of families. My thinking on Panditji, Indiraji, Rajivji etc has not been dynastic at all. It has been one of continuity of thought, of a process, of a way of looking at things. There is a simple question: Supposing Lal Bahadur Shastri had lived ten years, where would the dynasty be? You have no right to think that Lal Bahadur Shastri never existed. That's one thing that no one can deny. So these are matters of fate. So what I see is continuity of approach, not dynasty; continuity of thought with necessary changes. That is what we are proud of. Now, a person who doesn't belong to the family at all, a second person after Shastri, is there, but the continuity is there. That is what I am claiming. I am trying to prove that my claim is right, whatever I am doing. It is not exactly what Panditji did, but it arises from what Panditji did. This is the way I look at the whole parampara; it is the parampara of philosophy.

[Akbar] This parampara culture however has translated into a situation where in every constituency the leader's son becomes the natural political heir too. This creates a great deal of heartburn among ordinary Congress workers.

[Rao] Akbar, tell me, in how many cases has this happened?

[Akbar] In Rajasthan in the last Assembly elections, this was a major issue.

[Rao] In Rajasthan it was not the sons alone, it was also the outsider issue. It so happened that some ministers and important leaders from Punjab went to Rajasthan and seemed to make it permanent. There was a feeling that we have helped them once, twice, and now they are bringing their children. So these two combined. In other states, it was considered that giving a ticket to a widow of an important leader would bring us votes, it would be useful. It was a deliberate decision. There has been no idea of starting a dynasty anywhere. Of course everybody gets an advantage out of being the son of a particular person. If his father is a lawyer he gets all the books; if he is a doctor, he gets all the apparatus. And if he is a politician, he gets trained in whatever his father is doing. And reputation. And if that reputation makes a difference between success and failure in a particular election... again, it is utilitarian, proximity brings dividends. It is not as if we sprout family trees... this is done in all parties. This is done everywhere. I don't know why the Congress party is singled out for this.

[Akbar] What dividends will your son bring to the Congress in Secunderabad in this election?

[Rao] Well I think he has been chosen merely because he has been looking after the Pradesh Congress Committee. There has been a strong feeling among workers; that is perhaps the basis of his being chosen there.

[Akbar] Five years ago, one person tried to stop you from becoming Prime Minister: Sharad Pawar. Do you think that he will challenge you again, after the next election?

[Rao] I really don't know whether there will be any challenge. In Congress we always have, or at least we try to have a smooth changeover. I am not expecting or apprehending anything like that. This is an election we have to go through. The Congress has to get a requisite number of seats. These are the two important things we have to cross before we know who is going to be Prime Minister. I don't think it is timely now to discuss this. The time will come if all other things lead to this. There are people who plan for things which never happen; they are extra prudent or extra careful. As a person who is facing the music, I will not be able to think of what is ahead. Let me first win the elections, and if I can spend the next fifteen minutes in winning the elections then I think the time will have been well spent.

[Akbar] Will you be able to win the elections? If the Congress does not get a majority, will you ever take BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] support to form a government?

[Rao] I think that the Congress is going to form a government on its own. As far as the BJP is concerned, Congress is the one party which has had nothing to do with it; that is the Congress record. I don't know why this question is hurled at the Congress and not at the other parties. You tell me: should this question arise in the case of the Congress? When the Janata came to power with the help of the BJP we sat in the Opposition... so where is the question? Those who have been cooperating with the BJP should answer this. Those who have created this illusion that the Congress is with the BJP are absurd. I have explained this. I am absolutely clear: is there is something like an irreconcilable philosophy, it is the BJP philosophy. So where is the question?

[Akbar] Part of the perception may be because of the Babri tragedy. Now you have explained repeatedly that you were betrayed: but the question is clearly, why did you trust the people who betrayed you? It is the Muslims who feel betrayed, not just on this but on riots and over a long period of time, from much before you became Prime Minister. Today the Congress manifesto states that it will not allow a uniform civil code. But Muslims feel that if a situation does arise where this issue is on the boil, the Congress will once again compromise with communal forces.

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[Rao] It is my belief that personal laws should not be interfered with: not for Hindus, not for Muslims, not for Sikhs, not for anybody. What has been happening is that the Muslims have been always interpreting it as if they are under attack and not the others. I have explained that. There are so many other things: customs which have the force of law — they are so different from place to place area to area. No one is going to accept his custom or his part of the law to be removed lock, stock and barrel.

It is an interesting fact of your tenure as Prime Minister that of the 15 people you swore in as Cabinet ministers, 11 have had to resign on charges of corruption — between Mr Shankaranand to Ms Shiela Kaul. Does this say something about the Congress?

[Rao] You can interpret it in any way. There are some who also say that I have allowed things to go as per the law. In some cases, it is not proved corruption or anything, more a matter of propriety. Even now, the law is taking its course. But I have taken action so that the Congress does not become the target because of them. This is the reason they had to go. There is a particular process which is going on. Ministers have left their positions; they have not been considered for a ticket.

This (corruption) has happened in all parties. Except that in one particular party when the president himself is involved, he has continued as president and sacrificed a two-month-old MP-ship.

[Akbar] You are referring to Mr L.K. Advani of course.

[Rao] That is how they look at it. And this is how I look at it.

[Akbar] How much has the hawala affair damaged the BJP?

[Rao] I don't know. I have no idea. You must ask them. Public perception is known more to you than to me... These are all matters which the what I say will be read or analysed in the context of the election. So...

[Akbar] Your Congress colleagues say that you do not have the ability to stand by your colleagues, in the manner in which Indira Gandhi did.

[Rao] Show me one instance where Indira Gandhi, in spite of her colleagues being charge sheeted stood by them instead of letting the law take its course. What is the meaning of "standing by your colleagues"? I do not have the power to absolve them; it is somebody else who has to do it. I am merely saying: Stand aside, because there is an election and people will transfer your image to the Congress. That's all.

[Akbar] I am sure you have heard some of your former ministers tell you that you could have told the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] to be more generous while handling their case.

[Rao] When it comes to their own case, perhaps they may have hinted it... But ultimately they also stand for the rule of law. There may be some immediate reactions upon something happening, but on the whole people have taken it rightly.

[Akbar] But some of the ministers who have defied the Congress decision might win. That would be a paradox, wouldn't it?

[Rao] That won't be a paradox. They may have done so much for the constituency that the constituents are more grateful — they would like to condone something in the candidate, not I. There is no paradox at all. We have seen many smugglers winning from jail: so what? They don't cease to be smugglers. There are two, three faces of a person: you look at one, I look at the other.

[Akbar] Have you given tickets to any such people, of the smuggler variety, I mean.

[Rao] No. As far as I know...There are lots of people whose real history comes out after they get the ticket. To the extent that I got their history before the ticket I avoided any such thing. [Akbar] Are your other ministers — those who have not been chargesheeted — honest? Are you convinced they are honest?

[Rao] I don't have anything against them. The system says that until the contrary is proved you consider everybody honest.

[Akbar] In this system, can anyone fight an election without taking any money from industrialists? Can you say that in your political career you have never taken money from an industrialist?

[Rao] There is a method of running a party without needing donations from these people. I have said something about this in my Tirupathi address. It is possible for is now conjecture, because we have not been able to do all that I wanted to do, that I said I wanted to do at Tirupathi. I agree that later on things developed in such a way that the kind of reorganisation we wanted to do, the things we wanted to start never happened. We were overtaken by events. But I think it is possible.... I have fought elections. In one of them I had to sell a piece of land. But apart from that I have not spent anything lavish. My elections have been quite simple. As chief minister I spent only Rs [rupees] 15,000 as Assembly election expenditure. Because people were there to vote. In some areas in my state, food used to be free during elections: there

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were langars going on. If you add up all the expenditure it may come to much but it is really spending by the people.

[Akbar] The BJP says that it is going to take you to court for corruption after the elections. Any response to that?

[Rao] I have no response to that... what can I say to such things?

[Akbar] After having made so much noise about corruption, how could you ally with Jayalalitha in Tamil Nadu after your own party colleagues accused her of corruption for five years?

[Rao] On the whole it was a political decision taken by the working committee, by the members of the working committee: all the members apart from one or two were there.

[Akbar] The hawala members were not there.

[Rao] No, all the members were there. Except for Mr Karunakaran who could not come for the meeting. It was a political decisions, and was taken at that level.

[Akbar] Do you think that Mr Moopanar, if he wins, will join the Congress again ?

[Rao] (Smiles) You must ask him. I didn't think he would leave the Congress, so how would I know whether he is coming or not coming?

[Akbar] Congress working committee members have regularly accused you of not consulting them enough; indeed of making it a non-working committee. They say that inner party democracy within the Congress has been demolished.

[Rao] That's not correct. I have been consulting them quite regularly, informally, formally, in any way I could. I don't think there is any truth in that.

[Akbar] There is one anomaly which is constantly showing up in the opinion polls, for which you don't have much respect...

[Rao] I never said I don't have much respect. I said that the voter's mind is so inscrutable that no one can say that he has read it accurately or claim that he has read it accurately so much in advance. Today something may happen that may make previous assessments invalid. At the time they made the survey it might have been valid. I have great respect for the people who do this job. [Akbar] Certainly they got many of the Assembly elections wrong. But you could not gauge the mind of the Andhra voters in the Assembly elections.

[Rao] No. Definitely not. Not Andhra, not Karnataka, not Maharashtra.

[Akbar] What is your perception after the campaigning for the present elections ?

[Rao] That is why I don't want to say anything. After having seen previous response and result, it is not good for me... Generally I am hopeful that this being a Parliamentary election the response will be different and we will have a comfortable majority. The issues involved are so different, This is the logic of things. And on this I am basing all my statements.

[Akbar] But you are not getting any crowds at your meetings.

[Rao] That's not right. That's not correct. From the point of view of an election meeting, my meetings have been quite big.

[Akbar] Better than the Assembly meetings ?

[Rao] Some of them, yes. But we had a huge meeting at Vijaywada before the elections began; that kind of meeting does not take place in the general elections, no one has the time. As election meetings go, my meetings have been fairly good (this time).

[Akbar] The anomaly is that although the ratings of the Congress are very low, there is a great deal of consensus around your performance, that you have been a good Prime Minister. Normally a leader's rating drags a party upwards; what is happening this time?

[Rao] I don't know. I have no way of explaining these things...I have some bad experience of Panditji being praised by everyone and the Congress being run down by everyone. That is one distinct memory. Newspapers, and particularly magazine, did this parallel activity, praising Panditji to the skies and criticising the Congress. In our view, Panditji was great; the Congress also was great. In any case the Congress and Panditji in our view are inseparable.

[Akbar] Do you think you lost the poverty vote, or the vote of the poor, because of your economic liberalisation programme?

[Rao] No. In fact we have had more pro-poor programmes than ever before.

[Akbar] But has the perception of it hurt the party?

[Rao] No, no. People are seeing more money flowing into villages after this policy has been put into place. And I have been explaining every day to them.

[Akbar] Your whole election plank is stability: does it not have a tired ring to it?

[Rao] Who is tired of being stable?

[Akbar] If the Congress does not win, would you..

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[Rao] It does not arise; the question of not winning doesn't arise. The point is, I have always avoided answering hypothetical questions because they take you nowhere. Except that they might give you a few interesting headlines... But I have faith that the people of India do have understand the need and the value of stability no matter what you say. They also understand which is the party which can give them stability at the central level. These two facts I have been pressing on them and I am convinced that they are impressed. You always go by the logic of your own experience. Your experience may not be complete, but that's a different matter. But you can't do anything more than that. As I see it, the Congress will be voted to power.

India: Pakistan High Commissioner's Remarks Prompt Protest

BK0105053496 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Volunteers of the Indian National Forum staged a demonstration before the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi today. They were protesting against the remarks made by the Pakistani high commissioner in New Delhi, Mr. Riaz Khokhar, on holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir. They later submitted a memorandum accusing the Pakistani high commissioner of diplomatic misbehavior. The memorandum said that Mr. Khokhar's remarks are a blatant interference in the internal affairs of India. It may be recalled that India yesterday strongly dismissed the Pakistani allegation on rigging elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

India: Kashmir Issue Threatening India, Pakistan Nuclear Arming

MS3004125796 London THE DAILY TELEGRAPH in English 30 Apr 96 p 16

[Report by Christopher Lockwood: "Kashmir May be Nuclear Flashpoint"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Accusations of Indian involvement in the bomb attack on a bus in Pakistan are further evidence that relations between the two countries are in one of their periodic and alarming troughs.

Every day, troops deployed on either side of the "line of control", high in the Himalayas, exchange small arms and sometimes heavier fire. Far more worrying are the moves both countries are making towards joining the club of five nations that possess nuclear weapons.

The main opposition party in the current Indian elections, the BJP [expansion union] has pledged itself to go nuclear if it is elected, and the opinion polls now consistently indicate that the BJP will emerge as the largest single party in parliament, though short of an overall majority.

"We are in favour of a complete ban on nuclear weapons, but as long as other countries possess them there is no reason why India should be equipped with inferior weapons," says Jana Krishnmurthi, a BJP vice-president.

The incumbent Congress Party has not gone so far, but it has made clear its deep reluctance to sign up to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, whose final negotiating session begins in Geneva on May 6. If the session ends in deadlock, tension between India and Pakistan will advance another notch.

Indian defence analysts believe that, to protect itself, India needs 30 to 70 nuclear missiles, small even in relation to Britain's 300. Jasjit Singh, who heads the Institute of Defence Studies, argues that the primary security threat is a newly assertive China.

But the danger is that Pakistan will feel obliged to enter a nuclear arms race if India goes ahead. There are already signs of a conventional arms race: India is bent on acquiring MiG-29s from Russia, as well as submarines and a new aircraft carrier.

Formally speaking, neither India nor Pakistan yet possesses nuclear weapons. But security analysts believe that both sides have acquired the technology to assemble them within months. India tested a nuclear device in 1974 and, according to the CIA, signs of activity around its Pokharan test site late last year could be connected with preparations for a second one. India also possesses the means of delivery. It is developing a rocket, the Agni, with a 1,500-mile range, presumably for possible use against China, which possesses its own nuclear weapons.

It has also recently tested a short-range rocket, the Prithvi, whose only possible use would be against Pakistan. After the last Prithvi test. U.S. State Department officials gave warning that Pakistan was ready to conduct a nuclear test of its own if India went ahead.

Pakistan has almost certainly acquired delivery systems from China, as well as equipment such as high-powered magnetic rings needed to refine reactor uranium into weapons-grade material.

The main bone of contention between India and Pakistan remains Kashmir, whose population is predominantly Muslim but was attached to India at independence because its Hindu maharajah so decided. Despite UN resolutions calling for a referendum on the issue, one has never been held. India and Pakistan have gone to

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war twice over Kashmir and Pakistan now occupies half the state.

In the Indian portion, the authorities have fought a bloody war with Muslim separatists which has left 12,000 dead since 1989. More than 500,000 Indian soldiers are deployed there.

The maximum point of danger may come at the end of May, when India is due to hold elections for Kashmir's six seats in the national parliament. On Monday, Pakistan's ambassador to India, Riaz Khokhar, was quoted as saying that the Kashmir elections would be rigged by India to ensure the election of representatives favouring continued union with India. The BJP leaders have already demanded his expulsion, which they may shortly be in a position to achieve.

India: Communist Party Leader Interviewed on Elections, Coalitions

BK3004161596 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 28 Apr 96 p 6

["Excerpts" of "exclusive" interview with Jyoti Basu, Congress Party of India (Marxist) leader and West Bengal chief minister, by Ashis Chakrabarti at CPI(M) headquarters in Calcutta on 26 April]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Veteran CPI(M) [Congress Party of India (Marxist)] leader and West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu sees a crucial role for the President, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, after the general elections.

He says his confidence in the President's judgment has been reinforced by Dr Sharma's unequivocal role in the recent case involving Sheila Kaul that led to her resignation as the Himachal Pradesh Governor.

Taking time off his hectic election tours an over West Bengal, Basu, who turns 83 this July, told THE INDIAN EXPRESS during an exclusive interview at the CPI(M) headquarters here on Friday that his party would "do everything" to help form and save a non-Congress and non-BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] government at the Centre. Basu, who had played crucial roles in the formation of the previous non-Congress governments, however, rules out the possibility of his moving over to Delhi. He also dismisses the idea of retiring "as long as my health permits."

He hinted that several important Congress leaders, some within the party and others who have recently drifted away from it, are in touch with him over possible new alignments after the polls. Confident that the National Front-Left Front [NF-LF] alliance would be in a position to lead the government-forming process, he says his party will decide "immediately after the polls" whether to join the new Government.

If the BJP comes to power, he says, "it will spell disaster for the government and the people."

Excerpts from the interview:

[Chakrabarti] What do you think will be the post-poll scenario in Delhi?

[Basu] No party will be in a position to form a government on its own. So we'll do everything to help form and save a non-Congress, non-BJP government.

[Chakrabarti] Would your party join such a government?

[Basu] We've not decided yet. We'll do so immediately after the results. We'll join this government if the situation so demands. The CPI has already said it would join such a government. Several Congress leaders - in the party and recently out of it - have been talking to me of the possibility of joining hands with the NF-LF to form a government.

[Chakrabarti] Are you in favour of a coalition between the NF-LF and the Congress without Narasimha Rao?

[Basu] It'll depend on what these Congressmen do after the polls.

[Chakrabarti] BJP president L.K. Advani also says some Congressmen are in touch with his party to explore the possibility of supporting a BJP government.

[Basu] That's possible. There are communal elements in the Congress as well. But if we talk to Congressmen (who are have already or are willing to break with Rao) after the polls, it'll be on the basis of shared ideas and programmes.

[Chakrabarti] What kind of a role you visualise for the President in the event of a hung parliament?

[Basu] The country is in a mess. The President's role will be crucial. My confidence in the President has been reinforced by his stand on the Sheila Kaul affair. No President has acted similarly before. We contributed to his election as President. Rao spoke to me before deciding on the choice of the President. We had similar experiences in West Bengal in 1967 and 1969. The Governor called us to form the coalition governments. In 1971, however, I was not called in to form the Government although the CPI(M) had emerged the single largest party.

[Chakrabarti] But previous experiments of coalition governments at the Centre have been disastrous.

[Basu] Politicians have to draw lessons from those experiences. They ought not to let down the people again and again.

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[Chakrabarti] Will you and can you reverse the process of economic liberalisation if the NF-LF forms the government in Delhi?

[Basu] We're not against foreign investment and foreign technology. But we won't dilute our goal of self reliance. The Congress has opened our doors to foreigners irrespective of whether we need them in particular sectors. Even the Indian big business is divided on the new economic policies. But we've welcomed the freeing of the controls.

In West Bengal, we've suffered most because of the controls. The abolition of freight equalisation has at last given us an advantage. They gave us this, not because of me, but because the IMF and the World Bank said there should not be any such restrictions. We've also spelt out an alternative economic agenda.

[Chakrabarti] Do you see any shift in the BJP's policies since Ayodhya was made their major plank?

[Basu] If the BJP comes to power it will be disastrous for the country. There'll be complete disunity in the country.

The government and the people will be polarised. What the BJP is doing in the name of religion is simply uncivilised. You can't do that at the end of the 20th century. Last year, I was in London and I saw new temples, mosques and gurudwaras coming up all over the place because of the growing number of Asians. And here they are breaking down places of worship.

[Chakrabarti] The Congress has made your son Chandan's newly-acquired wealth a principal poll plank in West Bengal. Have you anyway contributed to his fortunes ?

[Basu] Chandan is a businessman in his own right and he pays his taxes. I've nothing to do with his business. Central Government agencies are free to look into his business.

India: Article Claims U.S. Wants Rao 'Back'; Questions U.S. Motive

BK3004145096 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 29 Apr 96 p 11

[Article by Jyoti Malhotra]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Robin Raphel, probably the best-known American official in India in recent times cannot really be blamed for speaking her mind on who the US believes will head a new government in Delhi. Since it is part of the job of foreign missions to send home assessments of major events in countries that they are accredited to — and elections definitely qualify — Ms Raphel was well in command of the situation when asked to comment on the situation by journalists in Islamabad last week.

The Indians are having an election and they are going to have a new government, she said, in itself nothing new. "And likely a new government headed by the same guy," she added. Interestingly, however, Ms Raphel refrained from clarifying whether the US thought that Narasimha Rao would be back heading the Congress party in power or whether he would head a government that is made up by a splintered BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and perhaps even supported from the outside by the Left. Whatever the smaller print, we now know that the US believes Mr Rao will be back in the saddle.

Why, though, would the Clinton administration want Mr Rao back? On the economic front, of course, the answer is clear: Narasimha Rao, like no other prime minister, has loosened controls enabling US companies to invest in and trade with India. With the result that the US is now India's largest trader and investor accounting for a whole 26 per cent of $18.7 billion foreign direct investment that has come into the country since 1991.

Washington obviously hopes that New Delhi will liberalise much further whatever the complexion of a new government. But they are also aware that this might be easier said than done with a non-Congress government at the Centre. Even though the right wing BJP is likely to be much more in favour of opening the economy to foreign investors — Congress ministers also say that the BJP has privately assured the US that if it comes to power it will sign the controversial intellectual property rights regime-at least in the beginning it will have to play to a predominantly 'swadeshi' [indigenous] audience.

The US assessment of the Congress government headed by Mr Rao, even on the nuclear front — a traditional hotbed of disagreement — has been more or less positive. Even though India did not sign the indefinite extension to the NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] last year, New Delhi has refrained from going ahead with conducting a second nuclear explosion. According to Brajesh Mishra, the convenor of the external affairs cell of the BJP, preparations were being made to conduct a nuclear explosion at the end of last year, but Mr Rao succumbed to US pressure.

Indeed, a US Government document called 'Proliferation: Threat and Response' which came out this month, also assesses the sub-continental security threats — and ends up giving a more or less clean chit to P.V. Narasimha Rao. This is what it says: "India has the resources for producing and reprocessing plutonium and for enriching uranium. It also has the ability to conduct nuclear tests, which would support attempts to produce

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more atomic weapons. However, New Delhi's willingness to refrain from conducting additional nuclear tests could inhibit the development of such weapons."

Further, the Congress is the only party that makes no mention of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in its manifesto. After the debate that has roused the nation these past few months, it is interesting that there has been no mention of the issues involved in the manifesto. The absence of any comment has already raised a glimmer of suspicion in people's minds: What does the Congress really want? Would it be willing to sign the treaty in exchange for, say, high-technology transfers? Whatever the truth, we don't have to wait too long to know. Its only two weeks to the last stage of the elections.

India: Space Organization's Scheduled Satellite Launches Detailed

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[Report by M. Ahmed]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The space commission has scheduled 10 remote sensing satellite launches in the next eight years at an estimated cost of over Rs[rupees] 2,000 crore.

This is India's most ambitious space launch plan so far and will rival the launch schedules of similar satellites by the US, Russia, France and China.

The earth observation systems office of the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) is preparing detailed mission profiles of the 10 launches and firming up the technical and financial requirements for the satellites and launchers.

Satellite 'Cartosat-1' with a resolution of 2.5 metres will be followed by 'Cartosat-2' with a resolution of I metre, which lends it true spy satellite capability.

The Cartosats will provide height information needed to detect targets and map features in small clusters.

By comparison, the IRS-1C, the latest Indian remote sensing satellite in the sky, has a resolution of 5.8 metres, which is good enough to provide quality terrain maps.

Of the 10 satellites, at least five will be launched by the polar satellite launch vehicle (PSLV). The remaining five will also probably be launched by the PSLV.

Of the 10 satellites, six, designated as IRS-P missions, will fill in certain gaps in the Indian remote sensing programme: high resolution images, special payloads for agriculture and ocean dynamics.

After the launch of the first five satellites during the next three to four years, the Indian remote sensing programme will be among the most comprehensive in the world covering all aspects of spotting from the skies and obviating aircraft surveys.

The space commission has already approved three PSLV flights, called 'C' missions. There will be three flights in this mission which will place the IRS-P4, P5 and P6 in orbit.

The first of these will measure the physical and biological parameters of oceans. The second will be dedicated to agricultural applications like multiple crop discrimination and species differentiation.

The images will facilitate crop scheduling and overall agricultural management and provide early warnings on drought and floods.

The IRS-P6 will feature the first of the Cartosats and have a 2.5 metre pan chromatic camera with stereo vision. The IRS-P7 will be a dedicated ocean observation satellite called 'Oceansat'.

It will provide data on wind, sea surface temperature, waves, internal waves and ocean bed resources.

Four satellites will be launched within the next three years and six more by 2004. Satellite 'Atmos', which will provide information on atmospheric conditions, monitor changes and gauge pollution levels, will be one of the six.

Apart from the special application satellites, Isro has the IRS- 1D, IRS-2A, IRS-2B and IRS-3 satellites in the launch queue. These will be a continuation of the current IRS-1C series of 'operational' satellites.

It is not known if these spacecraft also will be launched aboard the PSLV as the indigenous rocket has so far not been used for launching the operational spacecraft.

Isro officials said the difference between operational and experimental satellites is that the first carry proven payloads while the second test and qualify a new payload. Data from both classes of satellites will be used for Commercial purposes.

With the market for remote sensing services estimated to grow to $500 million by the turn of the century, up from $200 million at present, the IRS satellites have good commercial prospects. Till 1994, the value of data products from IRS satellites was a mere $1.3 million.

The demand for data products involving remote sensing is the highest in Asia.

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India: Indian National Congress Election Manifesto

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[Text of the "Election Manifesto of the Indian National Congress" for the General Election (Lok Sabha) 1996]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

PREAMBLE

Election is the life-line of democracy.

An election presents a choice to the people. The choice to vote a party into government. The choice to vote a candidate to office.

What is the choice today ?

The Congress presents an India with a bright future. The Opposition presents an India that will be thrown back to the past.

The Congress presents an India which is growing, creating wealth, generating jobs and providing more incomes. The Opposition presents an India which will be stagnant, inward-looking, poor and likely to become bankrupt.

The Congress presents an India which rejoices in its unity and celebrates its diversity. The Opposition presents an India that will be inflamed by caste and religious passions.

The Congress presents an India that has earned new respect among the countries of the world. The Opposition presents an India that will be ignored, ridiculed and forgotten.

The Congress presents an India with a stable Government and a vibrant economy. The Opposition presents an India with a tottering government and a collapsing economy.

Never before has the choice been so clear. Never before has the choice been so stark and simple.

THE 1991 ELECTIONS

The nation went to the polls in 1991 to elect the Tenth Lok Sabha.

It was after a period of 16 months of darkness, drift and economic disaster.

The Indian National Congress promised the people that it will get on with the task of rebuilding India.

As the Tenth Lok Sabha convened, there was a pall of gloom. Shri Rajiv Gandhi had been snatched away cruelly. He fell victim to the most despicable act of terrorism. As in life, so in his death, he upheld the causes of unity and sovereignty at home and peace and brotherhood in the world.

The Congress called upon Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao to shoulder the onerous responsibility of leading a Government which did not have a majority in the Lok Sabha. Shri P.V.Narasimha Rao, steeped in the Congress Tradition of sacrifice and service, accepted the daunting task.

In his first major address to the nation, he pledged that the theme song of his government would be Continuity with Change. Since 1991, the Congress has ushered in unprecedented change.

Never before in the history of India has so much change been wrought in so short a time. Never before in the history of the world has so much change been wrought with so little pain or suffering.

How did the Congress work this near-miracle?

THE CONGRESS - A PARTY AND A MOVEMENT

Let us go back to that historic day when the Indian National Congress was born. The founding fathers of the Congress recognised thatwhatthe people of India needed was not a mere political party. Because no political party could unite within its fold the plurality and diversity of India.

The Indian National Congress was, therefore, cast in a different mould, the mould of a national movement. Its purpose was to mobilise the Indian people into action and lead them to new frontiers.

During the freedom struggle, the goal was Independence.

During the early years of independent India, the goal was Unity and Sovereignty.

During the years of nation building, the goal was Growth with Social Justice.

After the wasted years of 1977 to 1979 and 1990 to 1991, the goal was restitution of a Government that Works.

During the period 1991 to 1995, the goal was to re-establish a Stable Government and resume the task of nation building.

It is because of the support of the people that:

—a minority government could add to its strength and command a majority in the Tenth Lok Sabha;
—the nation could be pulled back from the brink of an economic catastrophe;

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—economic reforms of an unprecedented magnitude could be unfolded;
—the pledge of ushering in Panchayati Raj could be redeemed and power given to the people;
—the world could be compelled to take note of India and her

stable polity and resurgent economy.

THE CONGRESS' RECORD

The Congress is a unique political party. It mirrors the basic ethos of a civilisation that is over 5000 years old.

It is the Congress that has created an India which is agriculturally prosperous, industrially advanced and scientifically developed. Above all, the Congress has maintained a commitment to democracy. Indeed parliamentary democracy would not have taken root in India and nurtured, but for the Congress.

Many other political parties are one-issue parties. Some exploit caste. Some exploit religion. There are parties which encourage fanaticism. The Congress has always rejected these divisive issues.

The Congress reflects differing and divergent interests and reconciles them into a single harmonious national mosaic.

THE CONGRESS THEME: STABILITY, NATIONAL SECURITY, HARMONY AND DEVELOPMENT

The Congress Party belongs to you.

It belongs to you regardless of your caste or religion, colour or race. It belongs specially to the poor, the neglected and the disadvantaged.

It belongs to the worker and the farmer. It belongs to the teacher. It belongs to the scientist.

It belongs to the soldier who defends the country.

It belongs to the millions of ordinary men and women who toil every day.

It belongs to the farmers and agricultural workers who produce record levels of paddy and wheat, pulses and oilseeds, cotton and sugarcane, tea, coffee and tobacco and a number of other crops.

That is why the Congress has remained true to certain unchanging values. These are:

—Unity and Integrity
—Democracy based on the Parliamentary system
—Secularism
—An independent Judiciary
—Freedom of Speech and Expression and Freedom of the Press
—Stability, social harmony and development

Neither victory nor defeat in an election has altered the Congress Party's allegiance to these values. Because these are the values inscribed in the soul of every Indian.

Because it is these values which can enfold the plurality and diversity of India.

It is not just unity in diversity; it is unity through diversity.

The Congress alone provides the link between all communities and sections of society. The Congress alone represents the composite nature of our ancient civilisation.

It is the Congress, and the Congress alone, which mirrors this India. The Congress pledges that it will remain true and faithful to these fundamental! values of the country

CONGRESS PROMISES STABILITY

Stability is the plank on which rests good governance. It is the foundation on which rests civil society.

There were only two periods of political instability in India. They were from 1977 to 1979 and from 1990 to 1991.

These were the years in which the Congress was not in office in the Central Government.

In 1977, the first non-Congress Government had the numbers on its side. Yet it failed miserably. Ultimately it fell.

In 1989, the second non-Congress Government obtained outside support and thus claimed a majority in Parliament. It was an opportunistic alliance. The bubble burst in 11 months. That Government also fell.

Neither their numbers nor their shifting affiliations could keep the non-Congress Governments going for a full period of five years.

Voted back to office in 1991, the Congress has redeemed its pledge of providing a Stable Government.

While the Congress remained united and strong, other political parties broke up. Several State Governments formed by other political parties crumbled.

Through this period, the Central Government has been remarkably stable.

It was not only a stability of numbers. It was the stability of policies and continuity of programmes. Indeed for

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some time it was stability in spite of the inadequacy of numbers.

The stability envisaged by the Congress is a comprehensive one. It necessarily includes :

i) National Security
ii) Strong secular character leading to social harmony and cohesion
iii) All-round development and economic growth with social justice leading to general prosperity.

Each of the above three aspects is an important function of Stability.

The Congress pledges that it will provide a stable government for the full period of five years in the Eleventh Lok Sabha.

STABILITY - SPRINGBOARD FOR CHANGE

A Congress Government is a government that believes in and constantly works for the people.

During the five year period of every Congress Government since 1952, the government has taken the country forward.

The Congress has always rejected the status quo.

The Congress has always advanced the aspirations of the people for a better life and a better tomorrow.

The Congress has used stability not as resting place but as a springboard to usher in change.

Stability brings change, positive and wholesome change.

We need not delve too far into the past. The period from 1991 to 1996 contains many examples.

The new economic policy is the product of a stable government.

Reservations for the Other Backward Classes is the product of a stable government.

Peace in Punjab is the product of a stable government.

Unprecedented increase in investments in rural and social development is the product of a stable government.

The employment boom since 1991 - three crore jobs in five years - is the product of a stable government.

These examples can be multiplied.

Your vote for Stability will be a vote for Change.

BOOM IN ECONOMY

When Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao's Government assumed office on 21 June 1991, little did the nation know about the impending economic catastrophe.

In point of fact, the nation was on the brink of default.

Foreign exchange reserves were at an all time low of Rs.2,100 crore. It was good for just two weeks' import.

Inflation was 13 percent and threatened to increase, as it did, to 17 percent.

Industry had come to a grinding halt.

The 8th Five Year Plan had been abandoned by the two previous governments.

Government was living on borrowed money. When they could not borrow more, the government pledged India's gold and borrowed more money.

It was an hour of shame. It could have turned into an hour of grief.

At that crucial point, the Congress Government took over and took up the responsibility of rebuilding the Indian economy.

Five years of hard work have yielded rich dividends.

Foreign exchange reserves are now at over Rs.60,000 crores, enough for eight months' import.

Last year, our farmers produced 19.1 crore tonnes of foodgrains. States like UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Orissa are now witnessing the type of agricultural change that Punjab and Haryana saw in the 1970s and 1980s.

Farmers are getting more income in relation to what they spend. Agricultural wages have increased.

New and lucrative export opportunities have been opened up to our farmers. Today, India is among the top three exporters of rice and wheat.

Industry is booming. Last year, the industrial growth was 8.5 percent. This year, it is expected to be 10 percent. This has resulted in increased supply of goods like bicycles, scooters, tractors, watches, televisions, shoes, cars, textiles, paper, cement, steel, fertilisers and medicines. For the first time, shortages have disappeared. Indians have the choice to buy what they want.

More jobs are being created every year. In the last five years, over three crore jobs have been created.

India's GDP has been growing at a satisfactory rate. From just 1 percent in 1990-91 to 6.2 percent in 1994-95 is, by all accounts, a remarkable achievement. 1995-96 will again witness growth of more than 6 percent.

India's exports have averaged over 20 percent growth in the last three years.

Inflation is down to below 5 percent, a record for 10 years.

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We are today the sixth largest economy in the world. Soon we will be the 4th largest.

That is the real picture of our economy.

GREATER SELF RELIANCE

It is the Congress which first put before the people the goal of self reliance.

That goal has been corrupted by some self-styled protagonists of national interest. What is true self-reliance?

True self-reliance is measured by:

—the capacity of the country to save more and invest more.
—the potential of the economy to create more jobs and generate more incomes.
—the capacity of industry and agriculture to absorb more investment and better technology.
—the capacity of the country to pay for the import of capital goods and raw materials.
—the capacity of the Government to pay for the import of essential articles like fertilisers, edible oils and petroleum products to meet the needs of the people.
—the capacity of the Government to repay the national debt and to pay the interest charges.

The poor countries of the world are not self-reliant. It is the affluent countries which are self-reliant.

Our goal is to make India affluent. Our goal is to make India truly self-reliant.

PEACE IN PUNJAB

As many as twenty seven candidates were killed by the terrorists when elections were ordered in Punjab during Shri Chandrashekar's regime as Prime Minister. Therefore, hours before the installation of the Congress Government, elections in Punjab were cancelled. Punjab was still torn and reeling under terrorism.

The Congress picked up the thread from where it had left it in November 1989.

Fencing on the border was resumed. The Punjab police was entrusted with the job of restoring law and order.

Within months, there was a gradual return to peace and law and order.

The Congress Government then took the courageous decision: to hold elections to the Punjab State Legislature and Lok Sabha.

Elections were held. The Congress was returned to power with an overwhelming majority.

That marked the beginning of a new era in Punjab. Elections to the Legislature were followed by elections to Nagarpalikas and Panchayats.

Today, the people of Punjab rule themselves through their elected representatives.

Today, there is peace in Punjab.

There has been a tremendous increase in economic activity.

Both industry and agriculture are thriving as never before. Indian and foreign companies are flocking to Punjab to make massive investments.

Punjab is a testimony to the statesmanship and wisdom shown by Prime Minister Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, in handling an explosive situation.

A NEW BEGINNING IN KASHMIR

The State of Jammu & Kashmir was relatively peaceful until November 1989.

The pitch was queered during the rule of Janata Dal. The Janata Dal was aided and abetted by the BJP.

Together they sacrificed the interests of the people of the State for political expediency. Together they destroyed the bond of trust and friendship between the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of India.

The Congress has strained every nerve to rebuild this bond.

The Congress believed - and continues to believe - that the people of Jammu and Kashmir deserve a Government of their choice.

The Congress has, therefore, promised that Jammu and Kashmir can enjoy a large measure of autonomy within the framework of the Indian Constitution. Article 370 of the Constitution of India shall stand.

The Congress believes that elections - howsoever difficult - are the only way to break the gridlock in Jammu and Kashmir [J&K].

Elections have already been ordered for the Lok Sabha from J&K.

The Congress further pledges to hold elections to the State Legislature. The Congress pledges to restore democratic government in that State.

PANCHAYATI RAJ RAJNITI TO LOKNITI

Shri Rajiv Gandhi's last great legislative initiative was the introduction of the Constitution Amendment Bills to provide for Panchayats and Nagarpalikas.

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He dreamed of restoring power to the people.

He dreamed of a government close to the people.

He dreamed of a vibrant grassroots democracy with women, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes sharing power and exercising authority.

But the Opposition Parties combined to defeat the Bills in Parliament in 1989.

Rajiv died in 1991, his dream unfulfilled.

Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao revived that dream.

The Constitution Amendment providing for Panchayats and Nagarpalikas came into force on 24th April 1993.

Seats at every level, including that of President or Chairman have been reserved for SCs/STs.

30 percent of the seats are reserved for women.

Elections have been held in all but three states of India to Panchayats and Nagarpalikas.

A silent revolution has taken place in the towns and villages of India. Its full impact will be felt in the next few years.

There are only 4000 MPs and MLAs representing the people in our political system. In a population of 95 crore, that was not enough. 30 lakh representatives at the grassroots — one-third of whom are women — will now emerge as leaders of the people.

MANDAL REPORT IMPLEMENTED PEACEFULLY

Reservations for the Backward Classes was an idea of the Congress. Jawaharlal Nehru made this into a Constitutional Principle in 1952. Reservations became a part of the Congress Party's social justice programme.

Since then, Congress Governments have successfully implemented reservations for the Backward Classes in several Congress ruled States.

In 1990, due to its ham-handed and opportunistic approach the Janata Dal Government triggered a virtual caste war in several parts of India.

The election of a Congress Government in 1991 brought peace to a society that was threatened with disruption by caste strife.

Quietly, but firmly, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao's Government implemented the recommendations of the Mandal Commission.

27 percent of the jobs were reserved for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the Central Government and in Public Sector Undertakings.

Today, even in the IAS and IPS, OBCs have been appointed, thanks to the implementation of the Mandal Report by the Congress Government.

A National Commission for Backward C:lasses has been established.

A National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation has been established with an authorised capital of Rs.200 crore. Its object is to promote economic and other developmental activities for the Backward Classes.

ANTI POVERTY PROGRAMMES

The abolition of poverty remains the foremost objective of the Congress Government.

Since the days of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Congress has declared its faith in programmes which attack poverty at the grassroots.

The very poor in India do not have property. They do not have jobs. Often they do not have work.

Needless to say they do not have houses, or sanitary latrines. Till recently the village artisans did not have efficient tool kits for improving their production.

These are some of the reasons of poverty.

These issues have been addressed by Congress Governments through a number of anti-poverty programmes.

The P.V. Narasimha Rao Government has enlarged and expanded these programmes. It has also introduced new programmes.

The investment in rural development and poverty alleviation during the period 1991-1996 has been Rs.34,000 crore. This is thrice the amount spent in the previous five years. It is proposed to increase this outlay by three times more, to around Rs.90,000 crore, in the next five years during the Ninth Plan.

The record speaks for itself.

In the four year period - July 1991 to July 1995:

— 115 lakh families were assisted under the Integrated Rural

Development Programme (IRDP).

—8.12 lakh wells were constructed under the million wells

scheme.

—28 lakh houses were constructed free of cost for Scheduled

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Castes/ Scheduled Tribes, freed bonded labourers and other

people below the Poverty Line under the Indira Awas Yojana.

—2.60 lakh villages/habitations were covered under the rural

drinking water supply scheme.

—21 lakh sanitary latrines were constructed under the rural

sanitation programme.

—4.21 lakh tool kits were distributed to 3,87,696 rural artisans all over the country.

—1.2 lakh groups consisting of several lakh persons were

benefitted under the Development of Women and Children in the

Rural Areas Scheme (DWCRA).

—13 lakh youth were trained under the scheme of Training of

Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM).

—7,837 projects were approved and Rs.160.85 crore were released

to 1,600 voluntary agencies for rural development.

The greatest success has been the creation of work - work which translates into incomes for the very poor and assets for the country.

Employment Assurance Scheme to provide wage employment for two persons in the household and agricultural labourers was introduced in 3198 Blocks in 391 Districts.

Wage employment under-Jawahar Rozgar Yojana was intensified in works based upon local needs and priorities.

These Employment Schemes would be expanded to provide wage employment to all persons seeking and needing it. This is the way poverty is being attacked.

NATIONAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

The Congress Government launched a National Social Assistance Programme on the 15th of August, 1995. This programme has three components and allocation of funds in the last two years has been over Rs.1500 crore.

A National Old Age Pension Scheme provides Rs.75 per month to destitute persons of 65 years and above. This will benefit 54 lakh people.

A National Family Benefit Scheme provides a lump sum benefit of Rs.5000 in case of natural death and Rs.10000 in case of accidental death of the primary bread earner of a family below the Poverty Line and aged between 18 and 64 years.

A National Maternity Benefit Scheme provides a lump sum assistance of Rs.300 to a pregnant woman above the age of 19 years below the poverty line. This is estimated to benefit 46 lakh women each year.

AGRICULTURE

Farmers are the backbone of our country and the economy. The Indian National Congress has always given the highest priority to them.

The Eighth Plan outlay for the Ministry of Agriculture was enhanced to Rs.10,000 crore as against a little less than Rs.3,500 crore in the Seventh Plan, an increase of over 180 percent.

No Government ever gave farmers such high remunerative prices by way of Minimum Support Price as was done by the Congress during the last 5 years. Thus the Minimum Support Price of paddy which was Rs.230 per quintal in 1991-92 was increased to Rs.360 per quintal in 1995-96. Similarly the support price of wheat was increased from Rs.275 per quintal to Rs.380 per quintal over the same period.

As a result of policy initiatives and special programmes introduced, the agriculture sector has become more competitive and efficient. Indian agriculture has been freed from controls of domestic and international trade which have substantially enhanced the opportunities for our farmers to reap remunerative returns.

Our progressive policies have enabled farmers to reach new heights of production and productivity. Higher production and productivity has in turn led to higher wages, enhancing the purchasing power of the rural poor.

Foodgrain production has increased to a record level of 19.1 crore tonnes in 1994-95. A major thrust was given to horticulture — the Eighth Plan outlay on horticulture is Rs.1000 crore against an expenditure of only Rs.24 crore in the Seventh Plan. India is now the largest producer of fruits and second largest producer of vegetables and coconuts in the world. The production of milk has increased substantially from 5.39 crore - tonnes

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in 1990-91 to above 6.3 crore tonnes in 1994-95. Total agricultural exports have increased from about Rs.5,000 crore in 1990-91 to over Rs.10,000 crore in 1994-95. For the first time the export of marine products crossed US $ 1 billion in 1994-95.

From a position where we used to import agricultural products, the agricultural sector today has become a dynamic outward looking sector, helping the economy by producing enough to meet the country's needs and also by earning valuable foreign exchange.

Our agricultural production strategy has moved to encompass all soil and agro-climatic conditions specially in the rain-fed areas and droughtprone areas, in which the bulk of our rural poor reside. Watershed development projects for sustainable development of these areas have been launched under National Watershed Development Projects for Rain-fed Areas (NWDPRA), Drought-prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Integrated Wasteland Development Projects (IWDP).

DPAP has now been extended to 946 Blocks in the country and its outlay has been more than doubled between 1991-92 and 1995-96. Its guidelines now provide for greater people's participation through Panchayats, Watershed Associations and self-help groups.

Another important step which has been in active consider and which will be implemented forthwith, is delicensing of the Suger industry.

The time has come when in overall terms, Agriculture needs to be accorded the status of an Industry. This will be done now, since all the other steps required in this behalf have been completed.

To protect the interests of Traditional Fishermen in the Coastal areas and to ensure the growth of joint ventures to be established under the Deep Sea Fishing Policy, the recommendations of the Review Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri P. Murari will be processed and implemented.

ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES

Essential commodities such as rice, wheat, sugar, palmolein and kerosene are distributed through the Public Distribution System (PDS) at prices generally lower than the market price through fair price shops.

In 1992, the Congress Government launched a scheme to revamp the PDS in 1752 backward blocks falling in drought-prone areas, desert areas and hill and tribal areas. Additional commodities like tea, soap and pulses are also distributed through the Revamped PDS shops. Additional allocations of foodgrains have been earmarked and foodgrains are distributed at prices lower than even in the PDS. The most vulnerable sections of our population are served through the Revamped PDS.

The PDS subsidy bill in 1995-96 was Rs.5,500 crore. The objective is to benefit the very poor and bring them relief.

The Congress promises to extend the Revamped PDS to 694 more blocks.

SCHEDULED CASTES

The National Commission for SCs and STs has been conferred constitutional status and has recently been reconstituted.

The National Commission for Safai Karmacharis has been constituted and has been in operation for the past two years. The Commission looks into the specific problems of Safai Karmacharis and recommends specific programmes for elimination of inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities for them.

A National Scheme was launched in March 1992 for liberation and rehabilitation of Safai Karmacharis so as to eliminate the inhuman practice of carrying night soil and filth on head by the end of the Eighth Five Year Plan.

A separate Finance and Development Corporation for extending concessional finance to Safai Karmacharis for starting self employment projects is being set up with an authorised capital of Rs.200 crore.

Reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, now made through an executive order under Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution, will be provided for under suitable Acts to be made by Parliament and the State Legislatures.

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and other applicable laws will be reviewed, amended and strengthened with the object of ensuring quick justice to the affected Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Rules under SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 have been modified with effect from 31.3.95 wherein payment of compensation to the victims has been increased manifold and the procedure for payment has also been simplified.

The Congress Government amended the Constitution in order to continue the reservations for SCs/STs in promotions.

In order to honour Dr. Babasaheb Amedkar and to disseminate his message of social justice and social emancipation, the Dr. Arnbedkar Foundation has been set up as a registered society to manage and administer

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the long term schemes and programmes identified during his centenary celebrations.

Dr. Ambedkar University in Lucknow has been converted into a central university.

Dr. Ambedkar Chairs have been instituted in 9 Universities in India.

Dr. Ambedkar Overseas Scholarships are awarded to meritorious students for pursuing advanced studies.

Dr. Ambedkar National Award has been instituted for promoting outstanding contribution in the field of social understanding and work done for weaker sections.

TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED) was established in 1987 with the primary aim of marketing Minor Forest Produce and surplus agricultural produce collected by the tribals so as to get them remunerative prices and to eliminate the middlemen who exploit the tribals.

The authorised share capital of TRIFED has been increased from Rs.50 crore to Rs.100 crore. The turnover of TRIFED has gone up 10 times from Rs.40 crore in 1990-91 to Rs.400 crore during 1995-96.

Tribal Commission under Article 339 (1) of the Constitution will be constituted soon to report on administration of Scheduled Areas and welfare of Scheduled Tribes in States.

BACKWARD CLASSES DEVELOPMENT

Congress Government took the historic decision to provide reservation of 27 percent to socially and educationally backward classes in civil posts and services under Government of India on 8th September, 1993.

The OBC candidates were given age relaxation of three years and 3 additional attempts in Civil Service Examinations.

A permanent statutory Commission for Backward Classes has been set up to make recommendations to the Government for inclusions/exclusions of castes in the Central List of OBCs.

The National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation has been set up with an authorised share capital of Rs.200 crore for providing concessional finance to the poorer sections of backward classes for setting up self employment ventures. During the last four years Rs'.146.5 crore has been disbursed so far.

The Pre-Examination Coaching Scheme has been introduced with effect from 1992-93 to prepare candidates from Other Backward Classes and Minorities for competitive examinations. The number of candidates coached under the scheme during the past three years has been around 6,630.

A new scheme for welfare of street children has been started under which NGOs are given financial assistance for care, protection and development of street children. 81 centres have been set up under this scheme covering 37 important cities.

A new scheme for setting up homes for the aged was launched in 1992-93. Under this scheme 209 old age homes, 239 Day Care Centres and 29 Mobile Units have been functioning.

WOMEN

Women have been in the forefront of the Congress while championing the causes of the people and in the freedom struggle.

Apart from the legislative and other measurers taken from time to time, the Congress Government has set up the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh to develop a network of credit services for women working in the informal sector and to support self-employment ventures.

The Mahila Samriddhi Yojana has been launched for the welfare of women. A woman who deposits Rs.300 in the post office will get Rs.375 after one year. A sum of Rs. 1,000 crore has been set aside for the scheme which will rnake our women self-confident, self-reliant and independent.

The Congress Government has established the National Commission on Women. Besides, there is a Commissioner for Women's Rights to promote the social well-being of women and check atrocities and violence directed at women.

The Congress Government has already provided reservations for women in Panchyats and Nagarpalikas. By a suitable amendment in the Constitution, Congress will provide reservations for women in State Legislatures and Parliament.

WELFARE OF MINORITIES

The Congress regards all Indian citizens as equal.

Yet we recognise Minorities of several kinds because we recognise the special disadvantages that they suffer and the special help that they need.

This is not appeasement. This is heeding the call of the Constitution of India.

Equal status to all people and protection of the Minorities are fundamental features of the Indian Constitution.

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They are also the fundamental features of any plural society.

The cornerstone of Secularism is the security of the Minorities. The cornerstone of a civil society is the security of all people. The Congress will leave no stone unturned to secure the life and liberty of all the people including the Minorities.

The Congress regards the 15-point Programme for the welfare of Minorities as a charter of duties. The programme will be reviewed from time to time, revised and updated.

For instance, a Rapid Action Force, consisting of young men of all communities, has been established. They are stationed at sensitive places. Although new, it has already shown its mettle and earned public confidence.

The Congress Government has established the National Minority Finance and Development Corporation with a capital of Rs.500 crore. The Corporation will support projects and schemes that will promote the well-being of Minorities.

The Minorities Commission has been given statutory status.

The Congress Government has enacted the Protection of Places of Worship Act, 1991. The status of all places of worship as it existed on the day of Independence will be preserved. No one can now misuse any place of worship to divide indian society.

After wide-ranging discussions and consultations with Muslim Members of Parliament, Members of Central Wakf Council and other leaders of the Muslim community, a comprehensive legislation to amend and consolidate the law relating to the administration of Wakfs has been enacted. The Wakf Act has come into force with effect from 1.1.96.

The Maulana Azad Education Foundation has been set up as an independent entity with a Corpus Fund of Rs.30 crore with a view to promoting education amongst educationally backward Minorities in particular and the weaker sections in general.

PERSONAL LAWS

The Congress has made its position very clear on the question of Personal Law. The Congress believes that there should be no imposition by Government of any change in the Personal Law of any community or any section of people. Such changes, against the wishes of the community concerned, would neither be favourable nor acceptable, if attempted in the-name of uniformity.

WORKERS

The Congress is proud of the role played by the Indian workers in accelerating the pace of industrial development. The interest of workers has always been uppermost in the minds of successive Congress Governments.

It was Shri Rajiv Gandhi who set up a high level National Commission on Rural Labour when he was Prime Minister. The Government of Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao has taken important steps to implement the recommendations of the Commission and in extending social security and insurance schemes to various sections of unorganised labour.

The Congress Government has raised the eligibility limit for payment of bonus from Rs. 2,500 to Rs.3,500 per month and the ceiling for calculation of bonus from Rs. 1,600 to Rs.2,500 per month. Earlier it had increased the ceiling under the Payment of Gratuity Act to enable workers to get gratuity upto Rs.1 lakh.

EX SERVICEMEN

The Congress Government issued orders in March, 1992 sanctioning "one time increase" in pension with effect from 1st January, 1992 involving a recurring expenditure of about Rs. 140 crores. About 8.3 lakh defence pensioners will benefit under this scheme. Till April, 1995 over 5 lakh pensioners have already been sanctioned one time increases under this scheme.

The Congress Government has also undertaken various steps for the welfare of ex-servicemen and their families. Amounts of financial assistance provided from Raksha Mantri's Discretionary Fund to ex-service men in penury for marriage of their daughters, repair of house, education of children and medical treatment have also been enhanced.

WELFARE OF DISABLED PERSONS

In the last-four years, a number of initiatives have been taken for promoting the welfare of disabled persons.

A comprehensive legislation for safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities and enabling them to enjoy equal opportunities and participate in national life will be introduced shortly.

A National Finance and Development Corporation with an authorised share capital of Rs.400 crore and a paid-up share capital of Rs.200 crore has been set up to extend concessional finance to the disabled for self employment projects and promoting technical skills.

A National Trust for welfare of persons with mental retardation and cerebral palsy will be set up for which a Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha last year.

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The Indian Spinal Injury Centre has been set up in collaboration with the Italian government to provide treatment to persons suffering from spinal injury.

YOUTH

The Congress Government of Shri Rajiv Gandhi lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. Millions of young men and women have thus been given an opportunity to participate directly in the political process.

The population of India is getting younger. About 60 percent of the population is below the age of 40. That is 55 crore people. A Committee on National Youth Programmes has been set up under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister.

EDUCATION

The Congress Government of Shri P. V. Narasimha Rao has made a public and firm commitment to spend 6 percent of the country's GDP on education. This would mean a doubling of investments in education by the turn of the century.

The Congress Government launched a new mid-day meal programme to increase nutrition and improve school attendance of 11 crore children in classes I to IV in three years. In the very first year of the scheme, 3.4 crore children have been covered.

An innovative programme has been launched for overhauling primary education in 42 of the educationally backward districts of the country. This programme is focussed on the education of girls and disadvantaged groups such as girls, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and children with disabilities. This programme, which is in operation in 42 educationally backward districts of the country would be extended to all districts soon.

In more than 300 districts of the country total literacy campaigns have been taken up. The National Literacy Mission has made big strides and its achievements have been acknowledged widely. These total literacy campaigns would be further strengthened with special emphasis upon marginalised groups like child workers! pavement dwellers, migrant labour, etc.

Despite tight fiscal constraints, the Central Plan budget allocation for education has gone up by over 90 percent in the last three years. The Congress Government's commitment to education can be seen from the fact that Plan investment in elementary education has gone up by 130 percent in the same period.

The Congress is committed to ensuring universal access to elementary education by the year 2001, laying particular emphasis on the Girl Child and imparting a strong vocational bias to secondary education.

Access to Technical education, Vocational education and Higher education would be expanded and improved through distance learning modes, open schools and open universities.

Emerging areas of technology and management would be encouraged, supported and nurtured through centres of excellence.

POWER

Power is essential infrastructure for agriculture and industry. There is also growing demand for electrification of households. Development and prosperity means increased consumption of power. The improve ment in the quality of our lives depends to a large extent on the reliable supply of power.

With the best of efforts, the country is able to add about 4500 MW every year through public investment. A full 20 percent of the 8th Plan outlay has gone to the power sector alone. The demand for power is about 14,000 MWs per year for the next 10 years.

Hence the Congress Government took a decision to encourage the entry of private and Indian companies in the power sector. More private investment would release Government resources to be used in social sector programmes. A 1000 MW power station, if implemented in the private sector, would release Rs.3,000 crore which is the annual expenditure on the education sector. Thus investments in education could easily double.

The full effect of the Congress Government's policy of encouraging foreign and Indian private companies in the power sector will be felt in the years to come. The last four years have been a learning process for both the Government and companies involved.

In the last five years, between April 1991 and March 1996, power generation in the country has grown steadily despite considerable odds. While in 1990-91,286.7 billion units (BU) of electricity was generated in the year 1995-96 the generation was 379.8 BU, i.e., an increase of 93.1 BU, which, in percentage terms, represents an increase of 32.5 percent.

During this period the annual per capita consumption of electricity in the country grew by almost 24 percent to approximately 330 units.

Even this level of growth is not adequate and efforts are being intensified to meet the growing demand for power which is annually increasing by about 8 percent.

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The plant load factor, denoting efficiency of available capacity, rose substantially from 55.8 percent to 63 percent.

The Central Public Sector Undertakings in the power sector have shown a superb performance and made record profits of about Rs.1800 crores in 1995-96 and are now paying dividends to the Government regularly.

Besides electrifying about 75,000 new villages, over 21 lakh agricultural pumpsets in the rural areas were energised in the last five years. To improve the general health of the electricity sector, special efforts are being made to reform and restructure the State Electricity Boards so that their functioning becomes more viable and responsive to consumer needs.

Overwhelming response has come from investors within India and abroad and nearly 140 projects aggregating to about 66,000 MW of new capacity and involving an investment of Rs. 2,50,000 crore are at various stages of active processing. Given political stability, continued infusion of such massive investment into the power sector is sure to be achieved.

FERTILIZERS

The production of nitrogenous and phosphatic fertilizers has reached an all time record level of 104.3 lakh tonnes.

Fertilizers are also imported liberally. Thus, the availability of fertilizers has been ensured to fully meet demand at all times. In fact, at times there has been a glut.

Seven expansion projects in the public and cooperative sectors involving an investment of Rs.4200 crore are under implementation.

The price of Urea continues to be heavily subsidised. On every tonne of Urea sold to farmers, the Government of India bears a subsidy of Rs.2500. The sale price of urea in India is the lowest among our neighbouring countries.

To ensure that there is no shortage in the supply of fertilizers to our farmers, the Congress Government has taken steps to initiate joint ventures abroad. Projects in Iran, Oman and Tanzaniaare being finalised.

Fertilizer factories owned and operated by organisations of farmers' cooperatives like KRIBHCO and IFFCO have turned in excellent performances. They have major plans to set up new fertilizer plants in the country.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND POSTS

The Congress Government has ushered in a revolution in telecommunications.

The National Telecom Policy of 1994 is a landmark development. The Opposition parties criticised this policy, but the Government's stand was vindicated by the judgement of the Supreme Court in January, 1996.

In the last four years, 1.38 lakh villages have been provided with telephone facilities. Out of 2,43,555 Gram Panchayats, 1,55,410 have been provided with telephone facilities. By 1997 all villages and gram panchayats will be on the National Telecom network.

STD Public Call Offices have doubled in the last four years, providing gainful employment to nearly 10 lakh unemployed educated people in the country. All the 500 District headquarters, 90 percent of Sub-division headquarters and 85 percetn of Tehsil headquarters have been provided with STD facilities. In this way telecommunications is being used to bring the country closer together.

To ensure that more and more Indians have access to the latest telecommunication technology at affordable prices, the Congress Government has taken far reaching steps along with private sector participation. The private sector will mobilise resources and obtain the most cost effective equipment. The Department of Telecommunications will continue to be a major provider of telephone services.

The postal system continues to play a vital role in our country. In order to speed up transmission of money orders, a Satellite Money Order service has been launched covering 75 locations. This will enable instantaneous transfer of money benefiting lakhs of users in villages and towns.

SMALL SCALE INDUSTRY

The Congress is deeply conscious of the critical role that small scale industry plays in our economy. One of the very first steps taken by the P.V. Narasimha Rao Government was to announce a package of policy measures in July 1991 to strengthen the small scale industry.

A full-fledged Small Industry Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has started functioning. New legislation has been introduced to ensure timely payments to small scale entrepreneurs. Bank facilities have been strengthened in about 100 centres in the country where there is a cluster of small scale units.

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission has been revived. A Rs.1000 crore investment programme is under implementation to modernise these industries. This will create lakhs of jobs and open new markets for rural and small scale production enterprises.

All the steps taken by the Congress Government in the field of industrial and trade policy will create a

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new environment for small scale businesses. Improved technology is already flowing into the small scale sectors and new markets both in India and abroad are being opened up.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The Public Sector belongs to the people.

The savings of the people, tapped as borrowings and taxes, have gone into the Public Sector.

Our experience with Public Sector enterprises has been mixed.

Some enterprises have always done well. Some have been turned around recently. Others are chronically sick.

Some enterprises were put in the Public Sector because of security and strategic considerations. They will remain in the Public Sector.

Over Rs. 1,50,000 crore of the people's money has been invested in the Public Sector. The annual return is less than Rs.3,000 crore. This is grossly inadequate.

The restructuring of the Public Sector is therefore of the highest priority.

The Congress Government has set up a National Renewal Fund to fully protect the interests of labour and to provide adequate funds for retraining and skill development. Almost Rs 2,000 crore has been allocated to this Fund in the last two years.

The goal is to make these enterprises productive, efficient and profitable. The Congress is committed to achieve this goal.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Successive Congress Governments have been deeply committed to the development of Indian Science and Technology. It is because of this sustained support given by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Shri Rajiv Gandhi and, since 1991, by Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, that India has emerged as a leading nation in the development and application of Science and Technology.

Only five countries in the world have designed, built and launched satellites into space. India is one of them.

The INSAT satellite series are being used extensively for telecommunications, TV broadcasting, weather forecasting to our farmers and in giving early warning on disasters like floods.

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research has developed many processes for several vital and essential drugs. This will help in timely production of these drugs. And at a cost which is one third to one fifth the price of the imported drugs. These include drugs for the treatment of Malaria, Gastro-enteritis, Cancer, T.B. and AIDS.

New technology programmes have been launched to modernise tanneries, improve recovery of sugar and improve productivity of fish farms.

The country's atomic energy programme has been consolidated in the last five years. About 700 MWs of additional power capacity has been added. Nuclear technology is being used in preservation and storage of food, introduction and extensive use of high yielding and insect and drought resistant varieties of groundnut, moong and urad, high yielding varieties of bananas, cleaning of sewage, etc.

Impressive progress has also been made in fields like computers, robotics and lasers.

For the first time oral polio vaccine will be manufactured in the country. This will benefit 20 million children who are born every year.

Bio-technology applications to develop new varieties of cotton and rice and to improve the yield of our livestock population are now undergoing extensive transfer from laboratory to the field.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The people elect their representatives. Election carries the obligation of accountability.

The Congress Government is committed to providing an open, accountable and responsive administration at all levels.

The Congress Government is committed to the principle that all executive action - administrative or quasi judicial - shall be according to law.

The accountability of all to Parliament will remain supreme.

The Congress is committed to an independent judiciary. The accountability of all to the law and to the judiciary shall also remain supreme.

The revolutionary Panchayati Raj and Nagarpalika initiative will place power in the hands of people where it truly belongs. The strengthening of local governments will make the administration more accountable to the people.

The Congress will take steps to set up a Lok Pal. It will ensure that all those Congressmen and Congresswomen elected to public office will make a public declaration of their assets.

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All elected representatives belonging to the Congress will declare their assets on the day they enter upon their offices. They shall also make a declaration of their assets on the day they vacate their offices.

STRONGER DEFENCE

The Congress Governments have a proud record in securing the defence of India.

Every Congress Government has added to the strength of India's defence.

The period from 1991-1996 has been another period of strengthening India's defence forces.

The important achievements of this period are:

—The commissioning of the main battle tank 'Arjun'.
—The successful launch of Prithvi, Nag and Akash missiles and the successful completion of the Agni project.
—The development of the light combat aircraft (LCA).
—Commissioning of INS Shankul and India joining the select club of countries possessing frontline technology for submarine construction.

By the turn of the century, India's defence forces will have the most versatile main battle tank and the most modern military aircraft of its kind.

The Indian defence forces have always been soldiers of peace.

Following the great traditions of the past, Indian defence personnel were deployed abroad in several countries including Kampuchia, Somalia and Rwanda as part of the UN peace keeping missions to these countries.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The world has changed dramatically in the last five years. Indian foreign policy has had to face new challenges arising out of fast moving global political and economic developments. The Congress Government under Shri P.V.Narasimha Rao has adopted a pragmatic and flexible approach to meet these challenges and has reoriented foreign policy to make it an effective instrument for furthering India's economic and political objectives.

India's prestige in the world has been restored by the Congress Government. The country is now respected and sought after. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has made India a full dialogue partner — an honour that India now shares with the US, the European Union, Japan, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. By becoming a full dialogue partner India becomes a major player in the economic and security policy consultations involving some of world's most dynamic and fast growing countries.

A large number of developed and developing countries have supported the inclusion of India as a permanent member of the UN Security Council .

Prime Minister Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao's visit to China in 1993 resulted in the conclusion of the historic agreement on the maintenance of peace and tranquility along the line of actual control. It is an important step towards cordial relations and harmony between the two giant countries. Bilateral trade with China has registered a rapid expansion and Consulates have been opened in Shanghai and Mumbai.

With Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao's highly successful visit to the United States in 1994, the relationship between the two countries is growing closer by the day and the United States continues to be India's largest trading partner and the single largest investor country.

A large number of bilateral,agreements have been signed with Russia covering the entire spectrum of political, economic, technological and defence relations with Russia.

India's ties with countries like Japan, UK and Germany have greatly expanded following Shri Narasimha Rao's visits. These countries are taking greater interest in India's economic and social development.

India has always had close ties with developing countries. Traditional friendly relations with countries in the Gulf region, Iran and the Central Asian Republics have been further cemented and upgraded and given a tangible economic dimension.

New and close relationships have been forged with emerging economic powers like Israel, South Korea and South Africa.

A path-breaking development in India's foreign policy has been the launching of a regional economic cooperation initiative around the only ocean that takes its name from a country — the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean Rim Initiative launched in March 1995 will cover all areas of cooperation.

The SMRC nations took a significant step forward and launched the SMRC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) with effect from 7th December, 1995. They have resolved to usher in a Free Trade Area (SAFTA) by the year 2005 and preferably by the year 2000. India's pioneering role in promoting SAPTA and SAFTA has been recognised in the South Asian region and elsewhere in the world.

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The long-standing problem between India and Bangladesh relating to the Tin Bigha corridor was finally resolved by the Congress Government of Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao.

The voluntary return of Sri Lankan refugees to their homes commenced in January, 1992.

A landmark agreement for the development of the Mahakali river was finalised with Nepal. A large number of India-funded projects were commissioned in Nepal and Maldives.

An important border trade agreement was finalised with Myanmar thereby promoting trade, including border trade, for the benefit of the local people on both sides.

The Congress Government has taken every step to establish cordial and good relations with Pakistan. It proposed a series of confidence building measures that were, unfortunately, rejected by Pakistan. Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao has repeatedly said that India is ready to discuss bilateral issues with Pakistan without any preconditions and to resolve all outstanding differences peacefully.

The Congress favours a nuclear weapons free world and will continue efforts for total and complete disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. Our nuclear policy is geared for peaceful purposes.

We are deeply concerned that Pakistan is developing nuclear weapons unabated. They have already inflicted four wars upon India. In case Pakistan persists in the development and deployment of nuclear weapons, India will be constrained to review her policy to meet the threat.

A PLEDGE

The Congress Government at the centre has fulfilled almost all the promises made in the manifesto of 1991. It has amply demonstrated that the Congress is a doer and not just a talker. Its main concern has always been and will always be for the emancipation of the poor and their early entry into the middle and higher classes of the society.

In the foregoing pages the Indian National Congress has revealed a vital and important agenda. it is an agenda that will provide the nation with strength and stability and take us forward.

Internal peace and harmony, national security and political stability are the sine qua non of a strong India. An India that can hold its head high in the world. The Indian National Congress, as in the past, pledges to strive for these goals vigorously without any compromise or let up.

Within the framework of a large agenda contained in this Manifesto, the Congress presents the following concrete programme which will be implemented straightaway upon securing the mandate of the people. This programme is necessarily composed of:

a) consolidation of past achievements and

b) a great advance in the future

Our vision for the next five years, containing the main items for better life, is as follows:

Better Life

—Houses for houseless poor
—Jobs for jobless; Near full employment by 2002 A. D.
—Cheaper Rice and Wheat for the poor
—Drinking water for all habitations
—Mid-day meal for all primary school children
—Improved health and education facilities for all children
—Complete implementation of Operation Black Board all over the country, by end of IX Plan
—Broad gauge Railway all over the country
—Rail or Road linkage to all villages
—Empowerment of women, including by Reservation in Legislative Bodies.
—Age of superannuation of 37 lakhs Central Government Employees to be raised as may be recommended by the Pay Commission.
—Remunerative prices for farmers

Detailed comments on these and other important items of the programme are given hereunder:

1. Economic and Institutional Reform

(a) To carry forward the momentum of economic reform and restructuring of economic policies to achieve a higher trajectory of economic growth, efficiency and competitiveness in all production sectors and achieve 8 to 9 percent growth in GDP per annum.

(b) To initiate Rural Structural Transformation, consistent with and supportive of national reform. The main objective is to transform rural areas and backward regions to prosperity, with a diversified economic base, rural industrialisation and reduced rural-urban gap in transport, communications and services.

(c) To extend and enhance support to our scientists and technologists and foster rapid utilisation of science and technology in all our national tasks, specially defence.

(d) Intensify promotion of agro-processing, tiny and household enterprises, ventures and activities through

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improved arrangements for infrastructure and credit facilities and freeing them from bureaucratic and procedural formalities.

(e) Re-orient agricultural science and technology, extension and other support systems towards rain fed and drought-prone areas and extend Watershed Development Projects for conservation of water and protection of land with people's participation. The entire rain fed and dry areas in the country would be covered through these watershed development projects.

(f) Continue and strengthen the policy reforms, price incentives and input subsidies which have improved the relative profitability of agriculture and have enabled our farmers to reach new heights of production and productivity.

(g) Time bound implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on Revitalisation of Land Reform Administration and Computerisation of Land Records (P.S.Appu Committee), in consultation with the States.

(h) Usher in a new policy for cooperatives to restore their democratic structure and autonomy of management.

(i) Formulate the Ninth Five Year Plan in time with wide ranging consultations especially with the State Governments.

(j) Enhance the functional and financial domain of self-government institutions established under Constitution (73rd and 74th Amendments) Acts and support measures for training and decentralised planning at the micro-level.

(k) Ensure that District Planning Boards as envisaged under Article 243 ZD of the Constitution, are established in every State at the district level to initiate, integrate and consolidate participatory local level plans.

(k) Implement the recommendations of the Committee of Members of Parliament and Experts on the law concerning extension of constutionai provisions relating to Panchayats and Nagarpalikas to scheduled areas.

2. Removal of poverty and unemployment

(a) Extend the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) to all 4997 blocks in the country and intensify the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), to provide wage employment to all adults seeking and needing such employment.

(b) Extend the Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) to all the 3f98 backward blocks in the country and to families residing in Urban slums. Reduce the issue price of rice and wheat distributed in RPDS blocks by Rs. 2.00 per kg.

(c) Extend Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) to all 4997 blocks in the country and ensure arrangements for nutritional support equivalent to 150 gms of foodgrains per day to all the eligible pre-school children and expectant and nursing mothers.

(d) Extend the National Mid-Day Meal Programme to cover all elementary schools in the country and enhance the quantum of foodgrains supplied per child from 3 kg. per month to 5 kg per month, with the condition of 20 days' attendance of the child per month in the academic year.

(e) Provide skill development and self-employment opportunities to all literate youth belonging to poor households through intensification of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and the Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY).

The Congress promises near-full employment by 2002 AD on the following basis:

Estimates of additional employment generated in the first three years of the Eighth Five Year Plan have been made on the basis of Provisional Estimates of GDP for 1992-93, Quick Estimates of GDP for 1993-94 and Advance Estimates of GDP for 1994-95 released by the Central Statistical Organisation and estimates of employment elasticities made in the Planning Commission. According to these, additional employment opportunities of the order of 187.8 lakh are estimated to have been generated during the first three years of the Vlil Plan, implying an average rate of employment growth of 2.03 per cent per annum. During 1995-96 and 1996-97 employment is likely to grow by 150 lakh, making a total of 337.8 lakh during the Eighth Plan.

If these efforts are stepped up through intensive implementation of Special Employment Programmes as mentioned in the chapter on Anti-Poverty Programmes and growth of 7 to 8 percent is achieved during Ninth Plan Period, achievement of 100 to 110 lakh jobs in a year and a total of 660 lakh jobs during 1997-2002 is feasible. This would give near fulfillment of the objective of employment for all by 2002 AD.

(f) Enhance the quantum of benefits to persons from poor households under the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) being implemented with the active participation of Panchayats and Municipalities to:

(i) Rs. 100 per month for old persons above 65 years of age; and

(ii) Rs. 500 for maternity assistance.

(g) Extend Mahila Samriddhi Yoiana to group savings and activities of rural women and provide facilities at

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their doorsteps for opening of accounts and receipt of interest income. Bring about a five - fold increase in the number of accounts opened.

(h) Take all measures for substantial reduction of Child Labour and total abolition of Child Labour from hazardous industries.

3. Basic needs and human development

(a) Ensure that 6 percent of the country's GDP is spent on education and intensify all related activities for promotion of capability and involvement of teachers and provision of school buildings and educational aids on a mission mode to achieve universalisation of elementary education and foster excellence in higher education.

(b) Launch a national sanitation programme to intensify public health and immunisation activities; to secure a disease-free atmosphere in te country, with the involvement of Panchayats, Nagarpalikas and NGOs. Implement innovative school health programme to provide health education as well as health services to all the school children through the help of primary school teachers and primary health-care providers.

(c) A comprehensive survey on the status of drinking water in rural habitations conducted during 1991-93 has revealed that even after almost completing all the main villages, there are still a large number of habitations without adequate source of drinking water or chemical contamination of water through excess of fluoride, iron, arsenic and salinity. All these habitations would be provided with safe drinking water sources through intensification of outlays and implementation of Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme by the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission.

(d) The 1991 census has revealed the total rural housing shortage comprising of houseless rural families or those living in unserviceable rural kachcha houses as 1.3 crores. The Indira Awas Yojana will be expanded to provide a pukka house to all these households.

(e) Launch a massive housing programme to provide savings-linked housing loan assistance at subsidised rate of interest, with life insurance cover to benefit all economically weaker sections households in rural and urban areas. This scheme will be administered through HUDCO and other housing corporations, boards, development authorities, cooperative societies and NGOs and with direct credit from LIC, GIC etc. and will be designed to benefit one crore households.

(f) Strengthen the post-harvest activities, cold storage, pre-cooling, refrigerated marketing and transport facilities in the country, thereby minimising post-harvest losses and enhancing the incomes of the cultivators in these districts.

(g) Protect our biological and environmental heritage through strict vigilance over pollution, denudation and displacement and promotion of sustainable development through participatory mechanisms such as Joint Forest Management Groups.

(h) Introduce a system of "proximity benefits" in favour of a specified number of villages adjacent to a large industry, to be funded out of the funds of the industry upto about one per cent of its outlay. Details will be worked out at an early date after the new Congress Government takes over.

4. Special measures for excluded sections of our society

(a) Formulation and implementation of a national strategy to promote full participation and equality, of persons with disability in all programmes of rural development and other social sectors under the newly enacted legislation for disabled persons.

(b) Enhance the allocation of funds and intensification of the activities of the Commissions and the Corporations established for the welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes, Minorities, Women and disabled persons, to pull up their socioeconomic development and to deal with gaps and missing links in their development process.

(c) Extend the reservations for certain excluded categories in deserving cases, such as Dalit Christians and for Women in Vidhan Sabhas and the Lok Sabha.

(d) Appoint a Commission on Tribal Areas under Article 339(1) of the Constitution to report on good administration of Scheduled Areas and welfare of Scheduled Tribes in States and implement its recommendations within one year.

5. National Security and Integration

(a) Relentless fight against terrorism and all other anti-national activities with special developmental efforts in States and regions which continue to be disturbed.

(b) Strengthen the steps taken by the Centre, with States' cooperation, to protect our borders on land and sea in dealing with infiltration of foreigners, smuggling and narco-trafficking.

(c) Elimination of criminal nexus with influential segments and control of organised crime, that has come to vitiate our social, political and administrative structures.

(d) Central support for modernisation and training of police service, aimed at improving their response,

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quality of investigations and accountability to crime and treatment of offenders.

(e) Simplification of procedures and strengthening of judiciary for disposal of all pending cases in three years.

(f) The National Security Council formed in 1990 proved to be unwieldy. The Congress Government, after il came to power in 1991, has made a thorough reappraisal of the aspects of national security and a new blueprint, suited to the Parliamentary system of Government, has been evolved. At the apex is the Cabinet Committee on National Security (CCNS) with three Cabinet Sub-Committees on Internal Security, Defence and Foreign Policy. A strategic policy group will contribute to the CCNS, assisted by the Joint Intelligence Committee and a strategic technology sub-group. Experts from outside the Government could be associated with these groups, giving a wide scope for fresh ideas and papers to be produced for the decision of the CCNS. The new body will be set up as soon as the new Congress Government takes over at the Centre.

6. Vigilance and anti corruption

(a) Appoint a high powered Commission consisting of eminent jurists, parliamentarians and administrators to recommend legal, administrative and enforcement measures to control and contain corruption and implement these measures within 6 months.

(b) Establish LOKPAL with jurisdiction over all political offices, including that of the Prime Minister and the Chief Ministers.

(c) Reduce the amount of discretion obtaining in administrative decision-making, including at Minister's level, so as to render them public, transparent and accountable.

(d) All members of Parliament, Legislatures and local bodies to declare their assets, when assuming office and when leaving office.

(e) Review the work of the enforcement agencies at the Centre and in the States with a view to accord adequate autonomy and insulation from interferences in discharging their duties.

(f) involvement of the public in vigilance and control of corruption through public hearings, access to information and promotion of voluntary organisations in this area.

(g) Strengthening of internal vigilance and anti-corruption mechanisms for preventive and punitive vigilance in all Government, Quasi-Government and Public agencies/organisations.

Ours is a commitment to provide an effective Government for a stable polity, based on performance, a commitment to preserve and promote the Unity and Integrity of India in which every section of the Great Indian Nation can live in harmony and in pursuit of happiness.

Vote Congress for:

— Stability

— Progress

— National Unity

— Secularism

GIVE CONGRESS(I) A MASSIVE MANDATE

India: Farooq Said Focusing on State Assembly Elections

96AS0020A Bombay NAVBHARAT in Hindi 7 Apr 96 p 4

[Article by Narendra Sahagal: "Dr. Farooq's Strategy in Kashmir"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A year ago, in May of 1995, the Chairman of the National Conference Dr. Farooq Abdullah, while addressing the Council of Journalists in Jammu, had pleaded with the Government of India to conduct elections in Kashmir without any delay. He had said that the political situation in Jammu-Kashmir was right for the elections and the citizenry of the state could not be deprived of their democratic rights any longer. He said, "If not now, then never." The same Dr. Farooq on March 7, while addressing a journalists association in Jammu, made a diametrically opposite statement. He said that the situation in Jammu is not ripe and it will not be possible to hold elections here. Dr. Farooq in shifting his political strategy has unsuccessfully tried to fool the public and the journalist world. He exposed his worldly wisdom by saying that though we will not contest the elections, we will also not boycott them. We will support and campaign for our friends with similar conceptions and interests, and will continue our struggle for the National Conference of Jammu-Kashmir.

A year ago when Dr. Farooq had pleaded for the elections in Kashmir, the situation there was much worse then it is today. The Election Commission, after witnessing the violent incidents of May 1995, had advisedthe Government of India to not conduct the election in Kashmir. If Dr. Farooq does not consider the present day situation in Kashmir fit for elections how then will he campaign in Jammu-Kashmir in support of friendly parties? His policy of not contesting the elections and at the same time not to boycott has imprinted a big question mark on his intentions. Dr.

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Farooq has demanded self rule for Jammu-Kashmir based on his clarification of the conceptual foundation of the National Conference. He wants to bring back the state to the 1952 political environment. His demanded is supported by the National and Left Fronts. Dr. Farooq will campaign in favor of these two "friendly" parties. It is noteworthy that he was fully prepared to take part in the elections a month ago and to leave this condition apart. Now, suddenly in deciding to stay away from the elections he would once again prefer that the citizenry of Jammu-Kashmir be left at the mercy of the terrorists. It is common knowledge that at the time seperatist violent incidences started in the valley in 1989, Dr. Farooq had left the citizenry of Jammu-Kashmir at the mercy of these terrorists for London and never even looked back for the next three years. Most of the leaders of the National Conference had also taken residence out of the valley.

Farooq has only adopted a mask, talking of "the debased situation in the state". The reality is something else. He is not in a position to show his face to the people of Jammu-Kashmir, workers of the National Conference and the young terrorists "struggling for independence". That is what happens to a run away leader during a tight corner. At this time Dr. Farooq is concerned about his own security. The National Conference has practically speaking lost its base in the entire state. The area has six parliamentary constituencies. All three constituencies in Kashmir - Anantnag, Baramula and Srinagar are besieged by terrorism. This Pakistan instigated "war for liberty" has annulled the influence of Farooq's National Conference. The extensive political base of his father Seikh Mohammed Abdulla knownh as "Baba'e Kashmir" (Father of Kashmir) has also vanished. A majority of the National Conference workers have surrendered in the face of fire. The Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] and the Congress have their candidates in two parliamentary seats from Jammu and Udhampur. In the past, because of the Muslim majority in Donda, Rajauri, Punch and Riyasi hilly areas, National Conference had some influence which now has receded. The Congress has its foothold in Ladakh's only parliamentary constituency because of the Buddhist majority. Farooq, at last, due to these conditions has decided to run away from the elections. The situation in the region may not be conducive to elections but it is even less favorable for his party.

Dr. Farooq has also successfully played a political move. These parliamentary elections, in fact, do not mean much for his party. His eyes are set on the Vidhan Sabha [state assembly] elections to be held after these [national] elections. That is why he has decided to support and campaign for friendly parties.

After the parliamentary elections Dr. Farooq can form an alliance with any party for the Vidhan Sabha elections. If the Congress comes to power he will readily accept "a little less than independence" and will side with the Congress. The same principle will be applicable to the third force [National Front/Left Front] if it rules. If the BJP takes the reins, Farooq will concede his demand for self rule and will enter in an coalition with them. In any case, by not participating in the elections Dr. Farooq has cleared the path to victory for the Congress. It is a topic of current discussion in Jammu-Kashmir that Farooq has entered into a secret agreement with Narashima Rao who has promised him full Congress support, if Congress wins, to make him the chief minister of Jammu-Kashmir.

India: Vajpayee Promises Ram Temple, Nuclear Weapons

96AS0020B Varanasi AJ in Hindi 8 Apr 96 p 14

[Atal Behari Vajpayee Interviewed by Amitabh Agnihotri: "If Atal Comes to Power; A Temple Will be Built in Ayodhya as in Somnath."]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Atal Bihari Vajpayee is the Bharatiya Janata Party's [BJP] nominated candidate for the prime ministership. Amidst his busy schedule he discussed the political scene and election related issues in detail with AJ. Excerpts of a long interview conducted at Vajpayee's residence at 6 Raiseena Road are here presented.

[AJ] The emerging picture of the 11th Lok Sabha indicates that no single party is in a position to acquire a majority. What are your thoughts?

[Vajpayee] What is the basis of your projection? The public at this time is eagerly longing for a change. This strong desire for change will attract them to oppose and vote against the Congress. The nation realizes that only the BJP can fulfil its desire of seeing a non-Congress government at the Center. This reality will incline the voter toward us. In a crude sense it is being propagated that the Congress, the BJP and the National Front/Left Front will each capture 100 to 170 seats. If so, how can a single majority government can be formed? This estimate is not logical. During the elections in Maharashtra and Karnataka such estimates were made. But the public there elected governments with clear majorities. The voters in this country are seasoned. Their ability to decide cannot be doubted. In this election too there will be a clear public outcome.

[AJ] Where does the BJP stand in the election run?

[Vajpayee] The BJP is ahead of everybody in these elections. A hopeful picture is emerging. The BJP

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is gaining strength. In Bihar our alliance with the Samata Party has strengthened the BJP. Likewise in Haryana and Maharashtra joining hands with Haryana Vikas Party and Shiv Sena respectively, has changed the situation there. In Maharashtra there is a wave of strong change. In all these states our strength will rise immensely. The Congress and the Janata Dal [JD] will take heavy losses.

[AJ] But what is the state of affairs of the BJP in the South?

[Vajpayee] In Karnataka a large part of the Raiyat Sangh has merged with the BJP. In the context of this election, it is important. This has not attracted enough media attention. There we left the Congress behind after the last Vidhan Sabha [state assembly] elections. We are in direct contest with the Janata Dal. In Karnataka the number of voters who had voted in the last Vidhan Sabha for the Janata Dal are inclined to cast their vote for the Lok Sabha in our favor.

[AJ] On what basis do you say that?

[Vajpayee] The voters in the state know that the Janata Dal cannot form a government at the center on its own strength. That is why they are inclined toward us. In Karnataka our show will be excellent. In Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal and in Delhi we already are the largest political power. There is no challenge to the BJP in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. In Madya Pradesh the Congress due to the hawala scandal is already ridden by internal calamities and disruption. In Tamil Nadu the Congress will be burnt by the Moopnar rebellion.

[AJ] Are you satisfied with the speed of your horse in this "Ashwamedh Yagna" [ancient ceremony in Vedic period]?

[Vajpayee] (Laughing) Only this week three English language periodicals have given their respective analysis on the possible election outcome. All three, though critics of the BJP, have come to a similar conclusion that we are ahead of everyone else in this race.

[AJ] What do you perceive as issues in these Lok Sabha elections?

[Vajpayee] There are several issues for the election but the increasing cost of living and unemployment are two such issues which are emerging as very influential topics. The BJP, in its general public meetings is presenting a list of 1991 prices in contrast to the currently prevailing prices. During the last five years of Congress rule the average man has broken down. The cost of living is skyrocketing and the government claims that "it is going four steps toward the sun". Narashima Rao's fiscal philosophy has been meaningless. The poor during this phase become poorer and it has become a burden to live.

[AJ] What effect, if any, on the BJP will the separate Vidhan Sabha elections have in Uttar Pradesh?

[Vajpayee] We, from the very beginning have demanded that Vidhan Sabha elections be held with the Lok Sabha elections. But now it appears that we will benefit the most from Congress's move for separate elections.

[AJ] How much benefit will you gain by the Samajwadi Party [SP] and Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP] contesting the elections separately?

[Vajpayee] We will be the beneficiary of this division in the state.

[AJ] How live is the Ayodhya issue now?

[Vajpayee] The Ayodhya issue is intertwined deep in the hearts of the public. The people know that if we get a majority, we by making it a law, will reconstruct a magnificent temple of Lord Rama in Ayodhya similar to the one in Somnath. It is also possible that as the BJP takes reins in New Delhi the Muslim behavior may change and they of their free will, may take back their claim from Lord Rama's birth place.

[AJ] Are there any signs of change in the Muslims?

[Vajpayee] The attitude of Muslims in the country now is not so anti-BJP as it used to be in December 1992, right after the fall of the structure in Ayodhya. Muslims are having second thoughts. The absence of communal riots and the safety of individuals and property in the states where we have our governments has indeed helped the Muslims to better understand the BJP. This condition is in our favor.

[AJ] But the Party Vice President Arif Beg has resigned from the party alleging that the party has disregarded the Muslims?

[Vajpayee] His resignation is unfortunate. We have never disregarded the Muslims. We have Muslims in important positions right from the Rajya Sabha to the organizational structure of the party. Yes, it is true that we could not run more Muslim candidates.

[AJ] If the BJP comes to power how will the change effect the neighboring countries including Pakistan?

[Vajpayee] If the BJP comes to power it will greatly influence all neighboring countries including Pakistan. In 1977 when I was the minister of foreign affairs we had succeeded in improving our relations with all of our neighboring countries. But, after we come to power,, our neighbors will have to understand that they must behave like good neighbors with us.

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[AJ] What is the BJP's view on the development of nuclear weapons?

[Vajpayee] The news of Pakistan's success in clandestinely developing nuclear weapons is still coming in. We were warning about this. But the Congress government has no solution to solve this problem except to talk. If the BJP comes to power, it will develop nuclear weapons in the country. It is our clear view that we should manufacture nuclear weapons and should inform the entire world about our intentions. The BJP considers the issue of national security supreme. [passage omitted on election constituencies]

India: BJP Seen Ahead on Issues

96AS0023A Varanasi AJ in Hindi 17 Apr 96 p 6

[FBIS Translated Text] The ruling Congress party by concentrating on economic liberalization, communal harmony, and stability has developed its entire election strategy. Based on the achievements of these three themes a multi million rupee publicity effort using private and public machinery has started. The prime minister is being presented as the successful implementor of these themes. But the prime minister himself is shrouded in the clutches of the hawala scandal. Will Narsimha Rao hold his head held high, in the face of S. K. Jain's statement to the Central Bureau of Investigation [CBI] of directly giving 30 million rupees to the prime minister for the election? Will the policy on economic liberalization be not dwarfed in the face of liberalization of corruption? Will the issues like the capture of small but extensive Indian industry by the multinational companies, unbearable pressure of the foreign debt, ever increasing web of the Pakistani secret service agency ISI in the country, increasing terrorism in Kashmir and the Northeast, the incidence of weapons dropped in Purulia area and numerous scandals of corruption let the Congress proclaim the achievements of its three election themes?

The Congress, in talking about providing the political stability in the country is inviting its own exposure. Opposition parties rule the largest states in the country; Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and Maharashtra. In the nation's capital too the opposition is in control. In this situation the issue of stability can only be seen as comical. Two legs of the Congress cot are already broken. The Muslim community holds Rao responsible for the so called conspiracy of the demolition of the disputed structure. The backward castes also hesitate to associate with the Congress. Without the support of these two factions the Congress will not be able to survive.

The political issues enumerated by the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] are substantial. At this time, BJP, the primary opposition party in the country, is determined to seek a majority and to form a government at the center. This party has governments in the states of Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. In Bihar, Karnataka, Madya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh it forms the main opposition.

Although there is no doubt that the BJP will retain Hindutva [Hinduness] as a main election issue, it has by launching Atal Behari Vajpayee as its candidate as the future prime minister, exercised practicality.

The election politics of the National Front/Left Front, [NF-LF], in basing its election issues on its opposition to the Congress and BJP's election issues, could not present an original intellectual basis. They felt it necessary to give Muslims false hopes to keep them away from the BJP. These folks (NF-LF) are fueling the so called communalism of the BJP. Similarly, it has become essential to incite backward castes to attract them to their camp.

It is not possible to estimate the chances of the Congress, BJP and NF-LF based on their election manifestos but at a glance the BJP's standing seems to indicate its strength. The BJP seems very confident on all of its election issues except for one —Corruption of politics. Issues of national security are BJP's undisputed weapons. The BJP has been quite explicit on the issue of Kashmir from the very beginning. To remove Section 370, to arrange for the return of the displaced Kashmiri Hindus to the valley, to take strong action etc.. are included in the BJP policy on Kashmir. Patronage of a culture based on Hindutva and recompense for Congress' false religious impartiality form the intellectual basis of the BJP policies. This foundation has made the BJP an alternate to the Congress on a national basis. That is why the policies, programs and election issues of the Congress and all other non BJP parties constantly oppose the BJP.

India: Narasimha Rao Seen Remaining Prime Minister

96AS0023B Varanasi AJ in Hindi 10 Apr 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Who Will Be The Next Prime Minister."]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Bharatiya Janata party [BJP] has presented Atal Bihari Vajpayee as its candidate for the prime ministership. Everyone is anxious to see Atal Bihari Vajpayee as the next prime minister but he can be installed as the prime minister only if his party gets at least 200 seats. The BJP will be able to form a government with the cooperation of other regional parties if it gets 200 seats. The BJP will not get any helping hand from regional parties like the Telegu Desam

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[TDP], Davidra Munnetra Kazhagam [DMK], All India Anna Davidra Munnetra Kazhagam [AIADMK] or the Akali Dal. If the BJP gets at least 200 seats, it will be supported by the Shiv Sena, the Samata Party, Chandra Shekhar's Group [SJP] and the Haryana Vikas Party [HVP]. A few BJP supported independent candidates may also join the BJP after winning the election. If it so happens, Atal Bihari Vajpayee will face no difficulty in becoming the prime minister.

The BJP, though, will have to fight a tough battle. On one hand it faces the Congress and on the other the National Front/Left Front [NF-LF]. Since this election lacks a wave, all political parties will have to face the election on their own strength or stature.

Numerous misconceptions are in circulation about the Congress (I), and P. V. Narasimha Rao. Though he is not generally considered a very successful prime minister during the past five years, he has hept a firm grip on his party. The prime minister is well experienced in diplomacy and in making and breaking alliances. Political observers and those who are experts in reading election trends consider it practical for the Congress to form a government at the center even if it only obtains 150 seats. It does not take much for a person like Narasimha Rao to transform 150 seats into 230. In the tenth Loksabha, also, he built his lean and thin government into a strong body. The Congress will get more cooperation from the regional parties as compared with the BJP. If Rao decides to form a government, regional parties like DMK, AIADMK, the Moopnar Alliance, Karanataka Congress and other small regional parties will cooperate with him. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao is well conversed in the art of splitting off the legislators of other parties to bring them into the Congress. Mr. Rao also knows how to buy them. If the Congress succeeds in getting 150 seats and is able to form a [coalition] government, obviously Narasimha Rao will be the prime minister. [passage omitted on NF-LF] In any case, the chances for Narasimha Rao to remain prime minister are quite strong.

India: Rao Seen Successful in Bid to Remain in Power

96AS0017A Jalandhar PUNJAB KESARI in Hindi 1 Apr 96 p 6

[Editorial: "What is Narasimha Rao's Strategy in the Lok Sabha Elections?"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The horn for the elections has been blown. Plans for various possible coalitions among the ruling Congress Party as well as the major opposition parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], the National Front/Left Front and various regional parties have been made. The situation is becoming clear now. The Machiavelli of Indian politics, Narasimha Rao, has finalized his strategy for the upcoming Lok Sabha election. Is Narasimha Rao's real plan to remain the prime minister? It will not make any difference to Mr. Rao if his Congress Party fails to win a majority in the Lok Sabha; he still will achieve his goal. If his party gains a majority, no one will be able to remove Mr. Rao from his position for the next five years. However, even Mr. Rao knows that this time around no party, including the Congress Party, will be able to win a clear majority. Therefore, Mr. Rao has developed a strategy in order to remain the prime minister. He knows that this Lok Sabha election will be polarized and he will have to get the support of the Janata Dal, the Communist Party of India [CPI], and other regional parties.

Mr. Rao has been working hard for the last three months toward his goal to become the prime minister a second time. We have seen a major difference between the pre- and post-Hawala scandal Narasimha Rao. Before the Hawala case, Narasimha Rao was surrounded by enemies right within his own party. Karunakaran, Balram Jakhad, Rajesh Pilot, and Madhav Rao Scindia were not only looking for opportunities to take over the prime minister's position, but also were disrespecting him [Rao]. Karunakaran and his group were pressuring Rao to bring back Arjun Singh and Tiwari into the Congress Party to forge unity. The crowd at 10 Janpath was increasing and the number of disenchanted Congressites around Sonia Gandhi was getting larger. The Congress Party was divided and the relationship between Rao and Sonia Gandhi was strained. The disgruntled Congress (I) leaders were repeatedly demanding that a meeting of the Congress Working Committee be called.

Meanwhile, the opposition parties, especially the BJP, were increasing their influence on Indian politics. The factions within the Janata Dal and the National Front were trying to unite again. The communist parties also started calling for unity among the opposition parties. The opposition parties had no other goal then removing Narasimha Rao from his position. All in all, the situation had developed in which Narasimha Rao had become a political millstone around the Congress (I) neck.

Suddenly, the Hawala bomb exploded and those who had pitted claim for the prime minister's position from all opposition parties as well as the Congress (I) were blown away. Madhav Rao Scindia and Rajesh Pilot, the strongest challengers for the prime minister's position, fell to the ground after this blast. The political strategies of Arjun Singh, Tiwari, and Jakhar were stalled. Karunakaran and Sharad Pawar suddenly became very silent and sat down like dogs with their tails tucked un-

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der them. Suddenly, all the fires of mutiny within the Congress (I) died. A very mysterious silence landed on 10 Janpath. [passage omitted on BJP perception]

Although it is very difficult to understand Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's mind, it is clear from the way he is moving his political chess pieces that he is aware of the fact that the Congress (I) will not be able to win more than 170 seats in the Lok Sabha. Narasimha Rao also understands that the main opposition party, the BJP, will not be able to win more than 150 seats. The National Front/Left Front will fare somewhere in between the Congress (I) and the BJP. However, when the National Front/Left Front leaders start fighting among themselves for the position of prime minister, it will be easy for Narasimha Rao to split them and have some of the factions join him. The truth is that the third front will provide Narasimha Rao help towards remaining the prime minister. [passage omitted predicting election results]

Narasimha Rao has numerous enemies within the Congress (I). If he does not become the prime minister again, there will be revolt in the Congress (I) and its leaders will seize power from Narasimha Rao. Rao will not be a opposition leader. If the BJP wins more than 180 seats, the National Front and communist parties will be forced to endorse Narasimha Rao in order to keep the BJP out of the Center. In light of these facts, political situations are becoming promising for Narasimha Rao to win the seat of power again.

India: Election Said To Herald Era of Coalition Governments

96AS0017B Jalandhar PUNJAB KESARI in Hindi 6 Apr 96 p 4

[Article by Sunil Sethi: "This General Election is Going to be Very Different than the Last One"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The most interesting fact about this Lok Sabha election is that its results will be extremely unexpected. Veteran political pundits, professional astrologers, and fortunetellers will have to review their forecasts. Usually these people are in high demand at this time, however, they are confused now. [passage omitted on Hawala Scandal]

This time, a candidate's ability to help his constituency and his own image will be more helpful than allegiance to a political party. One example of this confusion was seen last week when both the incumbent Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and the "waiting-in-the-wings" hopeful Atal Bihari Vajpayee had to file papers for their candidacy in two districts. It indicates clearly that they are not confident of winning seats in their home districts of Nandial and Lucknow, respectively.

Several facts and elements have made this election totally different from elections of the past. The greatest change is the end of "waves" in elections. The people in India had reacted fully to the waves that had originated between 1971 and 1991. The reason for that was that issues of those periods were associated with some major leaders of that era. All the elections that took place during the last 25 years were following or opposing the policies laid out by Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, and other such leaders. In fact, those elections were related to the personalities of those leaders and were influenced by them.

Indian politics changed during the 1991 election when Rajiv Gandhi was brutally assassinated. [passage omitted on politics before 1991] Our national politics has gotten rid of the influence of the Nehru dynasty. This means that the days of one majority party in the legislature are gone. The days of a political icon leading the nation are also gone. This means that various issues, be these regional or national, are becoming important in elections.

Usually before an election, the National Front and Left Front strengthened their ties. This time, these ties are limited to the regional level. The coalition of the divided Telugu Desam [TDP] in Andhra Pradesh is one of the interesting examples of this development. Samata Party leader George Fernandes' agreement with the Bharatiya Janata party [BJP] is an important change.

There will be new coalitions between various parties after the election. As the result of this, another minority government endorsed by major and minor parties will be established at the Center. There is fear that this situation will cause instability at the Center. In my opinion, the slogan for a strong and stable government that the Indira Gandhi family used to raise has died after Indira and Rajiv's assassinations. We are in a new era.

India: English-Language Newspaper Election Coverage Seen Biased

96AS0017C Jalandhar PUNJAB KESARI in Hindi 5 Apr 96 p 6

[Article by Arun Shourie: "The Question in the End is: What can be Believed?"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The election is very near and the English-language newspapers have started to give me election tickets again. THE HINDUSTAN TIMES announced that the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] is considering my name for a New Delhi seat along with Mr. Jagmohan and others!

The prime minister started the Congress (I) election campaign with a rally held outside the Delhi Red

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Fort. How many people attended this rally? "A huge crowd," said THE ASIAN AGE. "An enormous public meeting.." said THE TIMES OF INDIA. It added in small print that "the audience started to walk out of the meeting while he was boasting about his government's achievements. The party workers had a difficult time keeping them there." Yet THE TIMES OF INDIA sister publication, THE ECONOMIC TIMES, published its report with a five-column banner, "Rao's Inauguration of Election Fails to Inspire, Attract Crowds." "Mr. Narasimha Rao, the party president and prime minister, started the Lok Sabha election campaign and addressed a rather small rally outside the Red Fort. What was being touted as a huge rally disappointed the party organizers, who had left no stone unturned to bring in a huge crowd."

Laloo Yadav organized a "rally of the poor" in Patna on 18 March. It was a huge rally. THE INDIAN EXPRESS reported the next day, "this was right in the footsteps of Jaya Prakash Narayan who held a rally of the poor here 22 years ago." The newspaper announced, "Laloo Yadav has succeeded in responding to his critics by showing his great influence." "The huge rally was very encouraging for Laloo Yadav," proclaimed a heading in THE TIMES OF INDIA. The news coverage was a bit conflicting. It declared the rally as impressive, but also wrote, "despite its being impressive, the size of the crowd was smaller than some of the rallies the chief minister had held in the past. Today's crowd was a bit apathetic to the speech." THE ASIAN AGE also pictured this rally as a huge rally in its issue that day. However, three days later an editorial declared that the "rally of the poor" has left Laloo helpless. "The failure of Laloo Yadav's rally in Patna is like a warning of a coming hurricane which is not very far. The disappointingly small crowd was actually a negative vote because the Biharis have expressed their opinion about phony popularity. They are angry for many reasons." Was it "huge" or a "resounding failure?" Was this the rally that gave "new courage to Laloo" or did it "leave Laloo helpless?"

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS] and the BJP are still are the main targets of "cunning journalism." "The fear of communal rage after the RSS meeting," announced a banner in the 5 March issue of THE ASIAN AGE. "There is a widespread fear that the RSS will try to spread communal violence in northern India on the evening before the election," said the news story from Lucknow. "They are watching the annual convention of the RSS beginning on 8 March in Lucknow.... This is the fourth time that the RSS leadership has agreed to hold its annual convention outside his headquarter in Nagpur. This is the second time that this convention is being held in Lucknow. The first convention in Lucknow took place in March 1992 and it is meaningful that the Babri Masjid was destroyed that year. Our inside sources' say that the whole plan for this action was hatched during that convention."

The convention was held as scheduled, but is there any indication of the communal riots that were hinted in this report? Even the very objective THE HINDU reported that the three resolutions passed in this connection—swadeshi, corruption in public, national defense—are the kind that even left-wing parties raise." "Even those who are wary of communal parties' methods would find this changed agenda acceptable in pre- and post-election context." Said THE HINDU, "All these issues are of great concern to the nation." There is nothing in this agenda that would incite emotions. Perhaps the real agenda was prepared secretly in this much-propagated convention and the "inside sources" will tell us about it when those lunatic events will raise hell!

These newspapers informed us that no inside information is necessary. In other words that RSS had decided that it will help the BJP candidates as much as it can. There is nothing surprising in this decision. One does not need deep insight to come to a conclusion since several other such groups that do not hesitate in claiming that they are prepared to protect nationalism, especially Hindu naticnalism, have also emerged. Thus, the RSS will word its decisions in such a ways that not only the BJP but other organizations, Shiv Sena for example, are included in it.

The reports and conclusions presented by the RSS secretary show this effort. Newspapers, as usual, are full of news about this conspiracy. They reported that the RSS has decided to give full support to the BJP as well as to directly interfere in its affairs in order to stop the party's diminishing character. Then came a thunderous claim. If we use the 11 March THE PIONEER heading, we learn that "the RSS is unsure how to help BJP strengthen its roots." The editorial in the next issue, "Hindu color in politics," also echoed it by saying, "we can understand the agitation and uncertainty of the RSS to give active support to the BJP," said the editorial, "the same for the ideological context which is bothering the parent organization and its main political arm." The RSS had expressed its appeal more eloquently, the editorial said, "it will be clear to us even with a cursory review of RSS' list of priorities that it resembles the BJP list to the letter." Perhaps it was not cryptic enough and such openness does not go with the image that RSS has been given—that of a mysterious animal that always hatches evil plans. Therefore, as expected, the newspaper added a twist. The RSS is nervous because Hindutva has lost its emotional appeal. Since the RSS wants to determine

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the fate of our nation through political means, it is going to keep its options open. "It is not far fetched to believe that the RSS can give conditional endorsement to the Congress (I) and the latter is willing to adopt a comparable version of its agenda." Therefore, "there are all the reasons to believe that while the RSS will continue to support the BJP, it will adopt a more flexible attitude to fit the future political scene."

"Endorsement, but agitation and uncertainty, and mysterious possibilities in the future!" This editorial was published on 12 March in THE PIONEER. However, the same day the newspaper published a detailed analysis by its expert on Uttar Pradesh and RSS on the following page. Taking a major plunge, the newspaper announced that the RSS leaders have decided to put their full force behind the BJP. There is a major RSS group for politics, it said. This party is disorganized now. If they party is hurt, the whole goal will be jeopardized. Therefore, the RSS leaders had decided to put full strength behind the BJP and to save this "political party surrounded from four sides." The Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP] leadership is moving away from the BJP slowly, said the analysis. An RSS leader like Prof. Rajendar Singh "is upset at the party's lack of organization." However, "if he had the choice, he would like to keep the RSS strategy secret the way this party has been keeping the Indian intellectuals puzzled for the last four decades." Still, "its options are limited in the emerging political scene." Therefore, "seeing the inclination of the RSS chief, it can give up its pretense and jump into the political arena to save the BJP." Mr. Advani's chariot ride gives even more fertile ground for newspaper reporters and commentators: His differences were so clear that he could not be given any advice. His wishes were masquerading as facts. English-Language newspapers, usually while filing their report in Delhi, wrote explicitly that the chariot ride was a washout. The regional-language newspapers reports, sent by reporters travelling with the chariot, however, gave quite a different picture. [passage omitted giving further examples]

India: Fernandes Ready To Support BJP Government

96AS0021A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 10 Apr 96 p 10

[Article by Ram Bahadur Ray: "George Fernandes Wants a Vajpayee-led Government"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The coalition between the Samata Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] will give a new direction to politics in Bihar. "The state will finally be able to get rid of confrontation, terrorism, looting, and caste politics." These words by Samata Party's President George Fernandes indicate the strength of the coalition between Samata and BJP in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. There has been agreement on all 54 Lok Sabha seat in Bihar [BJP-32, Samata Party-22] while the BJP gave up two seats for the Samata Party in Uttar Pradesh [BJP-83, Samata Party-2]. The Samata Party is competing in 12 other states also. It has 90 candidates for Lok Sabha seats. George Fernandes says that his party is running to win 40 seats and using the other 50 districts for spreading [his] party philosophy and political awareness.

While Janata Dal has declared the BJP an outcast, Fernandes is accusing the left-wing factions of the Janata Dal of playing the politics of breaking up the country. [passage omitted on Janata Dal politics]

In what way is the Samata-BJP coalition in Bihar being viewed? In answer to this question, George Fernandes said that it is being welcomed everywhere. The politics of slogans has been put aside. The BJP and Samata Party have formed this coalition without compromising plans and policies. This has given hope to the people. Those who were practicing the politics of tension are disappointed.

Will this coalition result in a joint platform in Bihar? Both parties are trying to create more confidence among the workers and the people. The party workers of both parties are way ahead of Bihar's [Janata Dal] politicians. [passage omitted on election constituencies]

After independence, Bihar ranked fourth among Indian states in every sphere. Bihar became the most backward state only five years ago. Per capita income in Punjab is over 12,000 rupees while in Bihar it is only 3,650 rupees. Fernandes pointed out that when the chief minister himself [Laloo Yadav] was directing the looting of state treasurery, that there was no one to depend upon.

What are the challenges of this election? According to Fernandes, differences over policy and programs among the parties was almost negligent. Leftist Jyoti Basu now worships the World Bank. Karnataka's Deogawa and Bihar's Laloo Yadav are also following this path. There is no difference between Narasimha Rao and Laloo Yadav when they are tried on standards for corruption.

According to Fernandes, the real question is national security. For example, the increasing squeeze applied by China on our borders. China is controlling 125,000 square kms of our land. It is sitting with nuclear weapons in Tibet. In Myanmar, the number of soldiers has increased from 170,000 to 500,000 during he last four years and its military training is being conducted by China. China is building a naval base on Coco Island which is only 40 km from the Andaman and Nicobar

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islands. It is also trying to get India and Pakistan to fight with one other.

What kind of picture does Fernandes see after the election? The BJP will be number one. However, he admits that it is possible for P.V. Narasimha Rao to show some of his tricks. Ramakrishna Hegde is announcing daily that the Congress (I) should form a government with the National Front/ Left Front. The Marxists are full of hatred. They can be helpful in realizing Hegde's dream. The Congress (I) would, due to leftist policies, cause the country to suffer badly. Fernandes, therfore, wishes for a government that is solid and has a program with deadlines like that which would exist under Atal Bihari Vajpayee. [passage omitted on Congress' alliances]

India: Rao Said Decimating Congress (I)

96AS0021C Jaipur RAJASTHAN PATRIKA in Hindi 6 Apr 96 p 8

[Editorial: "Narasimha Rao and the Congress Party"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Narasimha Rao who is also president of the Congress (I) can claim that he has full control and dominance, of his party. However, he cannot escape the blame for breaking up the party into several factions. When Narasimha Rao took power he had made great promises of bringing internal democracy to the party. However, the results are to the contrary. The attitude, habits, and views that he had when he become the leader in a minority government changed surprisingly when he became the majority government leader. He does not appear to be worried about the long-term effect on the party of the path he has taken to remain in power. The discipline of the party of which he was so proud has deteriorated so much that it has become a major challenge and this should be a warning for Rao. What happened in Tamil Nadu is quite serious because the party ignored the majority opinion of the state Congress membership. The state party should have been involved in discussions before an agreement was made with AIDAMK. The election agreement with AIDAMK in Tamil Nadu indicates that Narasimha Rao ignored the future of the state just to win more Lok Sabha seats. This resulted in the division of the party. In any democratic organization, the leadership should try to get support from the people. This makes both the organization and the leadership stronger. Narasimha Rao could not stop the dictatorial attitude that the party leadership adopted after independence. Including some smaller political groups in the party does not make it stronger; it weakens the party. After all, it is not appropriate to run a major and old political organization by dictatorship.

If veteran party leaders desert it over election tickets, we have to consider this a party's weakness. There seems to be the same situation in all states. South India was the only Congress (I) stronghold left. However, the way the Congress (I) leadership formed election alliances clearly shows that the party leadership does not have much self-confidence left. Sacrificing principles and policies in order to remain in power will not work. The decision to not give election tickets to cabinet members who are involved in Hawala scandal is appropriate. However, even discussing the possibility of giving election tickets to the relatives of the ministers who have resigned is surprising and it hurt the credibility of the party. The party's slogan against corruption now seems to be meaningless. The prime minister forgot that bigger scandals than Hawala have taken place during his rule. However, no attention was given to investigation or the results of such investigations. The prime minister reluctantly took action on the recommendations made by the committee that investigated Pratibhuti scandal. Those involved in it were not punished in a way to stop political corruption. The most regrettable and distressing fact is that the prime minister himself is surrounded by suspicion. The Supreme Court has issued some edicts that would not make any government look good. The aggravation the Supreme Court expressed over investigating Chandraswami should worry any government in power who seeks reelection.

Narasimha Rao did not even consider the request to call the Congress (I) Working Committee meeting to discuss the Hawala scandal. There are many Congress (I) leaders whose names are associated with the Hawala scandal and some even have admitted to receiving money from Jain brothers. Perhaps, it is not possible to take legal action against them; however, the ethical issue still should have been looked into. What was the reason for not taking action against some central cabinet ministers? One accusation against Narasimha Rao is that he has damaged some important conventions and honor of the party. What does the failure to get the Working Committee into confidence point to? Dissension or disagreement should be discussed in democratic organizations. However, it appears that the tradition of paying attention to disagreement has disappeared. The leadership is focused only on remaining in power even when the Union is in danger. There are new challenges in front of the Congress (I) and the main reason for this is the end of internal democracy. If internal democracy is weakened, the party will weaken and the leadership cannot be excused from blame. Can Narasimha Rao and the party face these challenges? This is a subject for reflection.

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India: SP, Congress (I) Said To Reach Secret Agreement

96AS0021B New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 10 Apr 96 p 1

[Article by Hemant Sharma: "The Samajwadi Party and Congress Have a Secret Understanding Between Them."

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Congress (I) is feigning fighting elections in more than dozen seats in Uttar Pradesh. This is because of its declared agreement with the Samajwadi Party [SP]. In order to get SP support in half a dozen election districts, the Congress (I) has changed tickets from strong candidates to unknown candidates. Samajwadi Party's national chairman, Mulayam Singh Yadav, has endorsed central cabinet member Satish Sharma. This indicates that the unannounced agreement is already being implemented.

Mr. Kirpal Singh, former secretary general of the state Congress, calls this a suicidal conspiracy by the Congress Party. The Congress Party will not be able to win seats in two digits because of this conspiracy. He said that some Congress leaders are doing it for their selfish reasons. This election will be the basis for post-election coalitions. This election will benefit the marginal Congress faction led by Tiwari [Congress (T)]. This faction is doing better than the Congress Party itself [in Uttar Pradesh]. The reason for this is the unannounced pact with Mulayam Singh. The Congress (I) candidates for these seats have joined Congress (T) because most Congress (I) members do not like their party working with Mulayam Singh. [passage omitted giving names of candidates]

A close inspection of lists of candidates of both parties clearly points to the Congress (I)-SP agreement. Yesterday, Muzaffar Ali, a SP leader, also accused the Samajwadi Party of having an agreement with the Congress (I). The Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP] leader Mayavati said in her press conference today that the SP-Congress (I) agreement is a known fact and that is why we want to destroy SP. Until now, these accusations were levied by anti-Congress (I) elements, but now this question has been raised within the Congress itself. Ramkaripal Singh who was a member of Congress (I), has moved to Congress (T) recently. He has always criticized Congress' love for Mulayam Singh.

The Congress (T) can benefit from Congress (I)'s dilemma and its effect is visible in some districts. In elections districts where Congress (T) candidates are stronger, the Congress Party members have decided to support them. The Congress (T) is stronger in Tihri, Garhwal, Nainital, Amroha, Badayun, Khiri, Shahabad, Lucknow, Sultanpur, Bahraich, Dumariyaganj, Khalabad, Maharjganj, Devaria, Salempur, Azamgarh, Banda, and Bluandshaher election districts than the Congress (I). The main reason for this is Congress (I) running weak candidates there. Some members of the All India Congress Committee have written a letter to Prime Minister Narasimha Rao requesting him to interfere in this situation.

India: Political Morass Seen in Tamil Nadu

96AS0021D Jaipur RAJASTHAN PATRIKA in Hindi 11 Apr 96 p 8

[Article by K. P. Shrivastav: "Politics in a State of Uncertainty"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] What we were afraid of has happened after all—a new party under the leadership of Moopnar has been established in Tamil Nadu. The Tamil Manila Congress has formed an alliance with the Davidra Munnetra Kazhgam [DMK]. Moopnar says that he was forced to form a new party. "The party workers strongly insisted because they did not want to cooperate with the fascist and corrupt All India Anna Davidra Munnetra Kazhagam [AIADMK] at any cost. If I had not respected the wishes of our party workers, I would have no had place to go. While I was travelling from Delhi to Madras, I was thinking about how I could explain the High Command decision to the party workers. When I arrived in Madras I saw the atmosphere which did not allow any room for explaining things. This was the first time in my long political career that I had to face such a difficult situation." Two of the thee central ministers—Chidambaram and Arunachalam—agree with Moopnar.

COALITION

Generally speaking, Tamil Nadu has four fronts now and the Congress Party is involved in three of them. In addition to the Congress (I), the Indian Union Muslim League, the Forward Block, and the Toilers Party are members of the platform led by AIADMK. The AIADMK will run from 163 out of 234 Vidhan Sabha seats and 10 out of 39 Lok Sabha seats. The Congress will compete its candidates for 66 Vidhan Sabha and 29 Lok Sabha seats. The remaining five assembly seats have been given to other parties.

The Tamil Manila (Moopnar), the Communist Party of India [CPI], Indian National League [INL], and a second group of the Forward Block have joined the front led by DMK. The DMK will run for 176 Vidhan Sabha and 17 Lok Sabha seats. The Tamil Manila will compete for 40 Vidhan Sabha and 20 Lok Sabha seats. The CPI will pit its candidates for 11 Vidhan Sabha and 2 Lok Sabha

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seats. The INL will run for five and the Forward Block for two Vidhan Sabha seats.

The Congress (T) has agreement with the PMK. Despite Moopnar's efforts, Karunanidhi did not agree to work with the PMK. The PMK will run for 125 Vidhan Sabha and 16 Lok Sabha seats while Congress (T) will run for 45 and 11 respectively in a third front.

The fourth front is led by MDMK leader Gopalswami. The Communist Party of India-Marxist [CPM], the Janata Dal [JD], and the Samajwadi Party [SP] are included in it. The CPM will run for 40 Vidhan Sabha and 6 Lok Sabha seats while the Janata Dal will compete for 17 Vidhan Sabha and 8 Lok Sabha seats. The Samajwadi Party pits its candidates in 2 Vidhan Sabha and one Lok Sabha seat.

Dr. Subranaynam Swami [Janata dal splinter group] is a fifth horseman. He has been campaigning against Jayalalitha for the last 3-4 years. He wanted to join the DMK but Karunanidhi did not approve it. He is running for the Lok Sabha from Madurai. The party will have candidates from 39 districts.

It is clear that the real competition is between the two fronts led by the AIADMK and the DMK. These are the two major parties in the state. Gopalswami is a very strong critic of the DMK leadership. He was a member of this party before and his party had promised to form a coalition government. The MDMK supports a Tamil state in Sri Lanka and has accused the Center of controlling the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE], but is quiet on this issue because of the election. When the Karunanidhi government was dismissed over LTTE relations in 1991, he was a great supporter of the DMK.

Gopalswami is a strong critic of the DMK, the AIADMK, and the Congress Party. While attacking the DMK, he said that Karunanidhi talks about Jayalalitha government's involvement in corruption and wastage on weddings, but is quiet over corruption in Narasimha Rao's government. In other words, he was planning to shake hands with the Congress Party. It is possible that what he did not say at that time, he will say now. Anyhow, this election is important for both the DMK and the AIADMK. It is especially important for Karunanidhi—age matters after all.

COALITION AND BREAK UP AMONG PARTIES

Coalition and breakup among parties and changing party allegiance during elections is not a new development. All mainstream parties, except the communist parties, have fallen prey to this practice. Loyalty and respect for a party is a lesser reason than allegiance to a leader for changing parties. This process is a drawback of personality worship. We can only estimate how much loss the Congress suffered because of the Tamil Nadu incidents. It will take some time before the facts are brought to light.

Why did Rao shake hands with Jayalalitha? Many arguments and assumptions are presented. One of these is that Jayalalitha might have joined forces with Sonia Gandhi or the Bharatiya Janata party [BJP] to undermine Rao. Sonia Gandhi is out of politics, but one faction of Congress (I) worships her and hovers around her (Tiwari and Arjun Singh) Narasimha Rao also tried for her favors depending on the circumstances. No one can say with certainty who is bending toward whom. Moopnar and Chidambram cannot be moved with these arguments. In their opinion, any agreement with the AIADMK is equivalent to total submission and nothing else. [passage omitted on coalition politics]

India: BJP Said Ahead in Madhya Pradesh

96AS0021E Jalandhar PUNJAB KESARI in Hindi 10 Apr 96 p 8

[Editorial: "BJP Ahead in Madhya Pradesh"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Leaders of various parties have rebelled for not getting tickets for the Lok Sabha elections and Madhya Pradesh is not behind in this practice. I was in Bhopal when the political atmosphere heated up in Madhya Pradesh, equations changed, and situations were reversed. In Madhya Pradesh, former central cabinet member Madhav Rao Scindia and Kamal Nath rebelled from the Congress (I) and caused a lot of problems. Mr. Scindia started a new party called Madhya Pradesh Vikas Congress and is running for election from Gwalior Lok Sabha district. Kamal Nath had filed papers to run from Chhindwara on Mr. Scindia's party ticket, however, he withdrew later. He, however, announced that he will work to help Mr. Scindia win. Mr. Kamal Nath's wife, Mrs. Alka Nath is running from Chhindwara on a Congress (I) ticket!

While the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] has removed its candidate, Madhav Shankar Inderpurkar, from Gwalior to show its support for Mr. Scindia, the veteran BJP leader Sikandar Bakhat has declared him as "our man." He said that, "Mr. Scindia has always been our own man and he has returned to our camp now." Not only this, Mr. Scindia's mother and BJP leader, Mrs. Vijayraje Scindia, also said that she would work for her son if her party says so. Mother and son have been at daggers for a long time. It is important to mention here that Mr. Scindia and the BJP go a long way back and he had won his first Lok Sabha election on a BJP ticket. [passage omitted on various attempts at election alliances]

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Meanwhile, the BJP has challenged state's Congress (I) Chief Minister Mr. Digvijay Singh. Mr. Sunder Lal Patwa, former chief minister and BJP leader, led a party delegation to see governor Mohammed Shafi Qureshi and asked him to call a special session of the Vidhan Sabha and ask Mr. Digvijay Singh to prove his holding majority support. He said that since several Congress (I) legislators have resigned, Mr. Digvijay Singh's government is a minority government now. It was followed by the news that 12 rebel Congress (I) legislators had expressed their support for Chief Minister Digvijay Singh. However, BJP's secretary general, Mr. Kushabhau Thakre, said that Mr. Patwa's request for calling a special session of the Vidhan Sabha still stands.

Not only this, Mr. Digvijay Singh, Madhya Pradesh' chief minister, who used to say that his party is totally united and there was no danger to his government, has issued a statement that he cannot rule out betrayal from within. Mr. Digvijay Singh has accused the BJP of supporting Mr. Scindia in order to weaken the Congress (I).

I also had the opportunity to visit some reporters, writers, and leaders during my stay in Bhopal. It is generally believed that the Congress which had the possibility of winning 27 or 28 seats now is less optimistic because of the political upheaval within it. There are 40 Lok Sabha seats in Madhya Pradesh. It is estimated that the BJP will win 20 to 25 and the Congress (I) will win 15 to 18, while the remaining two seats will go to other parties.

Madhav Rao Scindia is running strong in Gwalior and Mr. Kamal Nath has a strong influence in Chhindwara. As long as Arjun Singh has relations with Congress (T), he cannot gain much. However, he will hurt the Congress (I) and the BJP will benefit from it.

As for the BJP, one faction is dissatisfied because of the party's endorsement of Mr. Scindia. Overall, the party is not fully healthy and the state unit of the party is still suffering from inner strife. Nevertheless, at this time, the BJP has the upper hand.

India: Joshi Victory Seen Critical for BJP

96AS0023Z Varanasi AJ in Hindi 15 Apr 96 pp 8

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] This constituency in Allahabad is very distinctive. According to political observers, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS], the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP] and the Bajrang Dal have entered full force into the former Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] president's constituency. All (poll) specialists are aware of the fact that this past BJP president is very near and dear to the RSS family. To win for this favorite son is very important to them, as his victory will restrain the so-called liberalism of the BJP candidate for prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

It is a famous political saying that among alike people some are more alike. This saying is not only applicable to people but is also applicable to election constituencies. Therefore, it can be said, that in the sphere of parliamentary democracy, some of the identical constituencies are more identical. In reality it means that certain constituencies are more important then others or they are made to appear more important. In Allahabad, Dr. Murli Manhohar Joshi's constituency is either important or has been made important. [passage omitted on campaign techniques]

The Sangh family is trying its best to make this Lok Sabha seat a VIP seat and this is both natural and evident. That is why this seat is being compared to Nandyal and Lucknow parliamentary constituency seats. The Prime Minister and President of Congress (I), P.V. Narashima Rao is contesting the election from Nandyal constituency and the prominent BJP leader Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee is fighting from Lucknow.

The workers of the Sangh family are heralding an Allahabad constituency victory as an honor because in the BJP government Joshi will certainly become deputy prime minister. In other words voters should not equate Joshi with any other ordinary parliamentary candidate. He should indeed be taken as a VIP candidate. His stature in the Sangh family is very high.

Some political observers on a cursory look may see this as a contest between the incumbent Janata Dal [JD] Member of Parliament Mrs. Saroj Dube and BJP's Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi. But many other political observers firmly believe that this contest is decidedly not only a triangular contest but a very complex triangular contest. These observers say that Ramsewak Patel of the Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP] should not be taken lightly. Maybe he is not a VIP, yet Mr. Patel has served as a minister in both Mulayam Singh Yadav's and Mrs. Mayawati's cabinets.

Patel is a Kurmi, and that in itself is not a small force, because in Indian elections casteism often plays a very decisive role. A majority of political observers, when talking about Ms. Saroj Dube, say that her party [JD] failed to sustain the support of the backward classes that it once enjoyed. She may have to pay the cost in this election. It is said that the political inclination of the upper class castes is toward the BJP, especially that of the Brahmin class. Ms. Dube's standing, even among the Muslim voters, is estimated to be shaky. Some political observers believe that in her constituency, the BSP has a better hold on Muslim voters.

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What does it really mean? It means that the backward and scheduled castes, along with Muslims, have become a joint force. This force is providing a strong base to Mr. Patel. This situation has pushed Ms. Dube to a very weak position. The distinguished BJP leader Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi is actually facing a tough fight on two sides. [passage omitted on campaign efforts]

Iran

Iran: Foreign Ministry Refutes U.S. Allegations on Iraqi Oil

LD3004185196 Tehran IRNA in English 1714 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Apr 30 (IRNA) — The Iranian Foreign Ministry here on Tuesday [30 April] dismissed as "unfounded" the allegation of a U.S. official on possible Iranian help to sell Iraqi oil in violation of the U.N. sanctions on Iraq.

The U.S. official had alleged that a Belize-flagged tanker, Naomi, carrying 1,300 tons of what he suspected was 'Iraqi oil', was stopped in the Gulf of Oman, after using Iranian waters to cruise out of the Persian Gulf.

The United Nations imposed sanctions on Iraq in 1991 after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Iran: Hajj Pilgrims Chant Anti-U.S., Israel Slogans

LD3004220596 Tehran IRNA in English 2117 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Al-Minah [Holy Mecca], Apr 30 (IRNA) — Several Hajj pilgrims here on Tuesday [30 April], while performing the symbolic stoning of the devil who had unsuccessfully tried to tempt the Patriarch Abraham in antiquity, chanted slogans against the terrorist state of Israel and its chief supporter the 'Great Satan', as the U.S. administration has come to be known.

'Al mowt li Amrika, al-mowt li Israel, ya ayyohal Muslimoun ittehadu, ittehadu' (Death to Israel, death to the United States, O Muslims unite, unite), echoed the voices of pilgrims from various countries at Mina on the last day of the Hajj rites.

Despite the presence of Saudi Arabian security personnel, the anger of the pilgrims was obvious at this year's Hajj, which coincided with the fresh wave of U.S.-backed terrorism by the Zionist regime in Lebanon.

"The 'jamra' at al-Minah which the pilgrims stone are similar to the satanic powers of Israel and the U.S.," said Abdur-Reza a pilgrim from India.

He told IRNA that "if world Muslims each cast a single pebble at their enemies such as Israel, we will never witness the slaughter of Muslims as was done in Lebanon."

The 'jamra' at al-Minah symbolizes the three places where Satan tried in vain to tempt Abraham and prevent the sacrifice of the patriarch's first-born son Ishmael.

The Hajj stands as a supreme testimony to the faith and struggle of Abraham. Muslims by sacrificing sheep and goats, commemorate the passing of divine test by Abraham whose offering was miraculously replaced by a ram.

This year's Hajj witnessed an upsurge in anti-U.S. feelings despite the stringent measures taken by Saudi authorities to prevent any public outburst in view of the situation in Lebanon.

On Saturday [27 April] at Mount Arafat, Iranian pilgrims held the traditional ceremony of disavowal of disbelievers by calling for Muslim unity, and warning believers of the threats posed by their enemies especially the Zionist regime.

Last Wednesday, a group of Arab youths at the holy Ka'ba, vociferously shouted 'death to Israel, death to the United States.'

Many voiced admiration for the Hizballah defenders of Lebanon, who are being seen as a model resistant force, as was borne out by the events in Lebanon, where the 'Party of God' without retreating a single step, responded to the crimes of the Zionist regime, by raining Katyusha rockets on northern Palestine.

Iran: Daily Urges Dayton Accord To Respond to Needs of People

LD0105082996 Tehran IRNA in English 0629 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 1, IRNA — Something practical must be done to keep the peace and accords have to be tailored according to the needs of people, an English-language daily stressed Wednesday [1 May].

Noting that the Dayton peace accord was signed but Serbs are preventing Muslims from returning to their homes and conflicts resulted in the killing of one Muslim and the injuring of another seven, the TEHRAN TIMES said, "We must talk to the people and see what is missing in the accord. If an accord is finally reached, then it must be enforced."

It wrote that if the Serbs have a legitimate reason for their actions, then, their grievances have to be heeded.

Otherwise, it added, their "stoning and stopping Muslims from returning to their former homes...must be

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stopped by some enforcement authority," stressing that if nothing is done about the situation, "there is no meaning to a peace accord, to international bodies and to NATO forces."

Stating that one reason for Serb bullying is that their criminal leaders have not punished for their crimes, it concluded by saying,"to teach saboteurs a lesson, all war criminals should be brought to book. This will prevent a repetition of past tragedies in the Balkans."

Iran: Commentary Views 'Arafat's Situation, Israel

LD3004170496 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 27 Apr p 16

["'Arafat Caught in an Endless Round of Treason"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Following the elimination of the anti-Zionist clauses in the PLO charter, the Israeli authorities said that action of 'Arafat's was not enough and stressed that the Palestinians should recognize Zionism and the Israeli Government in their new charter. The PLO's action and Israel's reaction have once again proved that for every step the Arabs retreat, the usurper Israel advances by two steps and expects more.

'Arafat's concessions to Israel, which began with recognizing Israel and continued with the suppression of the intifadah, and now take the form of changing the PLO's charter and officially degenerating the ideals of Palestine, will undoubtedly not stop there, and he is forced to travel on that demeaning road and make more one-sided concessions in the interests of the usurper Zionists.

The Palestine National Council was set up while Zionist crimes in Lebanon had reached a zenith and every day a number of innocent civilians were falling victim to the savage attacks of the cruel regime of Israel. [passage omitted]

With the intensification of the Zionists' cruelty in Lebanon, the changes in the PLO charter cannot have any other interpretation but collaboration with the criminals. The effort by 'Arafat and his loyal cadres in the Palestine National Council to change the PLO's national charter and eliminate the anti-Zionist clauses and articles was another chapter in 'Arafat's and his Zionist camp's black and treachery-ridden record. [passage omitted]

'Arafat now feels that has put a step in a direction which has no turn and must travel the path to the end because he had lost his popular support for good, he feels that he should, at least, earn some credit among the Zionists.

In fact with every day that goes by since the signing of the shameful agreement between 'Arafat and Yitzhaq Rabin, further humiliation for a personality who once was the symbol and the combatant hero of the Palestinians against the usurping Israel are coming to the surface.

With his recent action, 'Arafat has lost the reputation that he earned himself through the years of the Palestinians' struggle in the three decades of the life of the PLO. [passage omitted]

The day Israel agreed to give limited authority to 'Arafat to run Gaza and Jericho, it hoped, with this measure, that the responsibility for crushing the Islamic resistance of the Palestinian nation in these two regions, which are the main centers for the intifadah and Islamic resistance of the Palestinians, would rest with 'Arafat. It also hoped to transform the state of fighting in Palestine from fighting between Palestinians and Israel to fighting between Palestinians themselves. This was a wish that the Israelis didn't achieve, and the people's revolt against Israel has increased daily during this period. 'Arafat too, as a functionary and an executor of the Israelis' instructions, has so far not gained any victory in his subservience and his effort didn't bear any fruit, but only more disgrace to him and to the collapsing administration under his control.

The revolt of the nations of Palestine and Lebanon will not only not slow down simply because of treachery by those who advocate the guardianship of the people of Palestine and Lebanon, but will be cleansed of any political plague. The traitors of these two nations, as a part of this plague, will sooner or later be cleansed of the wounded body of the region.

Beloved Lebanon and the oppressed Palestine are two Islamic territories and belong to the world of Islam. Naturally no deception, crime, and conspiracy could create any doubt in this undeniable and obvious truth.

Iran: Daily on 'Retaliatory Attacks' by 'Martyrdom Seekers'

NC0105110396 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 20 Apr 96 p 2

[Unattributed Commentary: "The Power Levers of the Hizballah" from the "Today's Memorandum" Column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Even though it at first appears the occupied Jerusalem regime is in a position of strength in its attack on Lebanon and its massacre of the oppressed people, a cursory glance at the realities prevailing today and at the power levers of the Hizballah, in its capacity as the pioneer of a proliferating Islamic movement, proves that this initial verdict is hasty and unrealistic.

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The United States and Israel were hopeful that during the course of the compromise, they would be able to entrench the Muslim people of occupied Palestine and the popular intifadah and Hizballah movements. Unfortunately, the sell-out compromising Arab rulers— despite repeated warnings from caring and aware intellectuals in the Islamic Republic of Iran to prevent this shameful compromise—bowed to the wishes of the United States and Israel. Thus they thrust the oppressed people of Palestine and Lebanon into the arena of struggle.

What we are witnessing today in the Islamic world, with much trepidation, is a direct result of the massive treachery by the rulers who participated in this compromise. However, this is only one side of the coin, as these governments participating in the compromise not only did not oppose the other side, that is, the United States and Israel, they themselves were the objects of the hatred and loathing of regional Muslims for their unjustified and blatant silence over the Zionist crimes.

Facts and figures clearly prove that in the wake of their recent treachery toward the oppressed Palestinian people, these compromising governments are themselves in a precarious position. The bestial attacks by the occupied Jerusalem regime on Lebanon and the bloodbath unleashed by the Zionists—even though catastrophic and sorrowful—can be considered a beginning of the trend of disintegration and collapse of subservient puppet governments of the region in light of the Muslim awakening.

Events of the past few years clearly indicate that Islamist movements constitute a unique worldwide phenomenon, which cannot be contained or restricted within geographic boundaries. [passage omitted]

Today, martyrdom seekers over the vast Islamic world are lying in wait for Zionist criminals and their supporters. The revolutionary Muslim forces have learned from experience that to mitigate harm from the savagery of the enemy, they should decide where the arena of battle against the powers of world arrogance will be, and wherever there are signs of the criminal presence of Zionism and imperialism, it should be considered a target for retaliatory attacks by Muslims.

The tyrannical massacre of the devout forces in southern Lebanon adds to the disgrace of the shameful actions of the sell-out elements of the Arab world, who have chosen the path of compromise despite Israel's expansionism and aggression, and have turned their backs on the Muslim peoples.

The cry of the revolutionary masses of the Islamic world addressed to these sell-out rulers is: If you do not have the power and decency to join the ranks of the defenders of Islam's honor and prestige, at least you should not hinder the path of the destiny-making struggle of the revolutionaries. Stepping down from power and handing over the administration of affairs to the devout forces and true Muslims would at least be some compensation, even though scant, for the innumerable sins of the treacherous and sell-out rulers of your ilk.

Iran: Rafsanjani Sends National Day Greetings to South Africa

LD3004152396 Tehran IRNA in English 1403 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 30, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani in a message to his South African counterpart Nelson Mandela congratulated him on the occasion of the country's national day.

In his message the president said that friendly relations between the two countries have enjoyed promising growth in recent years.

He also hoped that bilateral ties will further consolidate in all mutual and international fields.

Iran: Rafsanjani Greets Leaders of Muslim States on Islamic Feast

LD3004165596 Tehran IRNA in English 1547 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Apr 30 (IRNA) — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani sent separate congratulatory messages to heads of Muslim states on the occasion of 'Id al-Adha.

In his messages, the president expressed hope that the auspicious 'Id will usher in further fraternity, understanding and cooperation between world Muslims, and help them to close ranks against the divisive plots of the enemies of Islam. 'Id al-Adha or the feast of sacrifice, which is celebrated on 10 Dhilhijja [30 April], commemorates the divine test of the Patriarch Abraham, the sacrifice of whose first-born son, Ishmael, was replaced with a ram.

Iran: Rafsanjani Opens Refrigerator Plant in Shiraz

LD3004184096 Tehran IRNA in English 1734 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Shiraz (Fars Province), Apr 30 (IRNA) — An industrial plant producing refrigerator compressors went on stream on Tuesday [30 April] in the presence of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

The plant is designed to produce one million compressors for refrigerators and freezers every year.

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The managing-director of the industrial plant said that compressor production would, besides saving the country dlrs. 30 million in foreign currency annually, bring dlrs. 20 million through the export of surplus compressors.

A total of dlrs. 62 million plus rls. 32 billion have been spent on the plant.

To protect the environment the plant is using chlorofluoro-carbons (CFCs) instead of ozone-depleting substances (ODS).

Iran: President Rafsanjani Opens Power Plant in Shiraz

LD3004201996 Tehran IRNA in English 1925 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Shiraz (Fars Prov.), Apr 30 (IRNA) — President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani today inaugurated a combined cycle power plant, 26 km southeast of here in the foothills of the Sabz-Pushan Mountain.

The first phase of the combined cycle power plant has been completed at a cost of dlrs. 189 million plus rls. 60 billion. It has a nominal capacity of 740 megawatts and is powered by 6 gas generators of 123,000 kilowatt.

The managing director of the Fars Electricity Department, Hamid Faturechi, said the plant after providing the 3,000 million kilowatt hours of electricity consumed by the province, would supply the surplus to the nationwide network.

The president is currently on an inspection tour of Fars Province.

Iran: President Rafsanjani Inaugurates Work on Shiraz Dam Project

LD3004221496 Tehran IRNA in English 2037 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Shiraz (Fars Prov.), Apr 30 (IRNA) — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani here on Tuesday [30 April] inaugurated construction work of the Mirza-e Shirazi Dam on the Qara-Aghaj River at Kuvar, near Shiraz.

The dam is designed to hold 243 million cubic meters of water.

The managing director of the regional water organization Engineer Khalil Rezaian said the dam would bring under control the waters of the Qara-Aghaj River and reduce the threats of seasonal floods.

The Mirza-e Shirazi Dam would also help irrigate 15,000 hectares of the regional farmlands, in addition to generating 5 megawatts of electricity.

The president, who started his inspection tour of Fars Province on Monday night, has inaugurated several industrial projects in and around the provincial capital Shiraz.

The president said that the inauguration of 2030 production units of various size in Fars Province, is indicative of the government's drive to reach industrial self-sufficiency.

Iran: Hashemi-Rafsanjani Addresses Fars Clerics

NC0105071396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani addressed a gathering of scholars, congregational and Friday imams, clerics, and seminarians from Fars Province last night. Referring to their important roles, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani stressed that winning over the peoples' hearts is an important matter and principle for the clergy and the secret of the swift victory of the Islamic Revolution is the peoples' trust in the sincerity of the clergy and their aspirations and divine objectives.

Elaborating on the magnitude of the major contemporary events that resulted in liberating religion from isolation and its subsequent active role in the realm of international politics, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani stated that the revolution was a miracle that delivered the final word, similar to the mission of the Prophets, and was attained with firm, divine determination.

Alluding to the selflessness, heroism, and sacrifices of the revolutionary nation in consolidating and perpetuating the hallowed ideal of the revolutionary Islamic system, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani asserted: The clergy should strive to strengthen trust and confidence among the people. It should use the instruments of government and all resources to respond to the queries and needs of the youth with a logical and reasonable approach based on a correct understanding of the world perspective and ideology.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani stressed: The clergy's path is based on deep thinking and foresight on governmental and international matters. We believe that governments that administer their affairs on the basis of fear and sycophancy are neither successful nor lasting.

The president explained: If we try to elicit society's loyalty to the government and the clergy by using ploys such as branding or maligning people, the consequences will be harmful.

He stressed the worthlessness of superficial concepts in religion and stated: These grand stories of the people's

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magnificent participation in ceremonies to welcome the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran's system all over Iran are a prominent example and an irrefutable indication of the trust that the people have in the clergy, which continue and are defended with vigilance despite the extensive adverse propaganda against Islam and the clergy.

The president then mentioned the greatness and the excellent level of the development and infrastructural projects being carried out in Islamic Iran and their role in strengthening its economic bases and independence and said: As the custodians of government, we should refrain from shallow and commonplace attitudes and unstudied planning, so that we can forge a civilization, the constructive efforts of which will endure for our children.

The president paid tributes to religious, scholarly, and cultural figures of Fars Province and described the role of the province's clergy during the period of the struggle and victory of the Islamic Revolution as very important and effective.

According to the special correspondent of the Central News Unit, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Ha'eri-Shirazi, the deputy of the Vali- ye faqih [supreme jurisconsult] in Fars Province who is also the Shiraz Friday imam, spoke about the role of the clergy in the province and its districts prior to the president's address.

Iran: Iran, Turkmenistan To Collaborate on Radio, Television

NC0105104496 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 18 Apr 96 p 7

[From the Weekly Supplement]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran will collaborate with Turkmenistan in the construction and equipment of the latter's new radio and television complex.

According to the Central News Unit correspondent, this subject was incorporated in the memorandum of understanding signed by the organizations of the two countries on cooperation between the radio and television of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan.

The report says that Dr. 'Ali Larijani, the chief of Iran's Voice and Vision, met [Isa Arazmadov] the head of the Turkmenistan radio and television and said: In view of the common historical, religious, and cultural denominators, there is adequate scope for cooperation between the media of the two countries, which can facilitate broader cultural ties. In view of the eagerness of the two countries, Iran's Voice and Vision is willing to boost its cooperation.

He said: In order to construct the new radio and television complex in Turkmenistan, the Rasaneh-Gostar company affiliated with the organization is carrying out feasibility studies.

A joint committee will assess the technical needs and requirements of the Turkmenistan radio and television in its first session so that they can be met to the extent possible, and the Voice and Vision can take steps to procure the equipment after the costs are calculated.

[Isa Arazmadov] the chief of Turkmenistan's radio and television, who has been in Iran for the past week heading a delegation said: This visit has yielded valuable experiences and we are hopeful that in the future we will be able to have more extensive cooperation in the exchange of programs and the utilization of the resources of the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Our correspondent states: According to the memorandum of understanding that was signed it was agreed that joint programs should be produced on historical and cultural themes, which have not been possible so far, and that Turkmenistan's radio and television should provide more news for use by the external services of Iran's Voice and Vision.

In view of Turkmenistan's educational needs, Iran's Voice and Vision has announced its willingness to begin training courses at its own expense at its Gorgan center and at its college in Tehran.

Iran: Tajikistan Bars Students From Coming to Iran

NC0105110596 Tehran SALAM in Persian 23 Apr 96 p 2

[IRNA Report from Dushanbe]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Education Ministry of Tajikistan refused to issue permission for 40 Tajik students to study in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

According to an agreement signed three years ago between the two countries, these students were scheduled to study at [Iran's] Qazvin International University, at the expense of the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Higher Education.

The above 40 students had been selected last year by the Tajik side for studying in Iran and should have been sent to Iran. However, at the last minute, the Tajikistan education ministry refused to allow them to do so.

It is said that the reason given by the Tajikistan education ministry is that it is concerned about the possible

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impact of what it describes as Islamic fundamentalism on Tajik students.

Iran: Paper Condemns Cultural 'Onslaught From Within'

LD3004171496 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 25 Apr 96 p 14

[Article by Ebrahim Eftekhar: "Onslaught From Within"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Seeing a video of a film showing some of our current actresses, at the invitation of an old friend, a fellow-combatant — which was, of course, only half watched — is the motive behind writing this article, so that we can, for the umpteenth time, point out the threat of the cultural onslaught and the collaboration of certain people in the country. So that certain cultural and arts officials stop ignoring it and prevent those germs of corruption which, in the guise of artists in the country's television and cinema, are making films, and are role models, for our Muslim children, youths, and people.

Yes, a film was produced about a party (probably a birthday party) which showed a number of male and female television and cinema artists rocking and rolling, wearing amazing outfits, and singing satanic [Persian: Taquti, reference to the Shah's era; here meaning pop music] songs. Up to that point the film was probably not so surprising because, in any case, one could not expect such artists with their record during the satanic era to behave otherwise at their own private parties. However, the reason why I continued to watch the film was that my friend insisted on showing me the mocking way in which the combatants' headdress was used as scarves on Western dolls on the streets of Tehran and the ridiculing of the dirges whispered by combatants on the [TV] program, "Tales of Victory" - a reminder of the self-sacrifices and the heroic acts of our brave combatants in the [re-] capture of Khorramshahr — which were sung amid the drunken cackles of those corrupt artists and with some of the words replaced with humorous expressions, which would bring tears to the eyes of any freedom-loving person.

It is not clear how this film was smuggled out of the party but it is a test of the zeal of our combatants and officials of the Cultural Revolution Council. Elements of the cultural onslaught inside the country should realize that they can no longer target the values and symbols of the nation's cultural resistance. Will the responsible officials respond or are they going to ignore this issue? [passage omitted]

The only solution to counter such films is to employ committed Muslim artists. The popular and Hizballahi actors and actresses, who were born after the Islamic revolution victory and have successfully passed their tests, should be encouraged and supported. The state officials in charge of promoting the arts should take part of the blame for allowing the corrupt elements to re-emerge 17 years after the Islamic revolution victory. These officials have been so complacent that they ignored the call to prayers in the midst of a film, shown at an art festival. The said art festival had been organized in one of the provincial cities. When the film was interrupted to play a record of the call to evening prayers, young boys and girls among the audience started shouting, screaming and whistling. There were a number of responsible officials, including several clergymen, among the audience. But they chose to ignore this lack of respect for our sanctities. When the officials deliberately ignore the instructions from the Islamic Guidance Ministry on the importance of respecting the call to evening prayers, what can we expect from the young boys and girls who, as a rule, should follow their elders?

Iran: Paper Views Minister's Comments on Press Freedom

LD3004145096 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 27 Apr 96 pp 3, 5

[Unattributed commentary: "Independence of the Press; From Law to Taste"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] It is more than 10 years since the last Press Act was ratified in Iran. Basically that length of time is enough for a law and its enforcers to be understood and established, provided sufficient effort, knowledge, and honesty are used in its execution.

Nevertheless, the current situation testifies to the fact that the tendency to understand, accept, and enforce the Press Act is still shaky and that the machinery and officials, which should by law adhere strictly to the law and its enforcement, tend to favor and adhere to their own wishes.

In the Constitution and the Press Act, in addition to the freedom of the press the independence of the press is also stressed. [passage omitted]

At a ceremony introducing model public relations offices, the honorable minister of culture and Islamic guidance clearly stated: "One of the duties of the press is to receive information from public relations offices and to pass it on to the public in the form prepared by and deemed appropriate by the public relations offices." He later added: "You (public relations officers) should look where you send your reports and in which publications they are printed. Consultation

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in such matters is within the scope of activities of the public relations offices and supply and guidance is within that of the Ministry of Culture. We know the background of all the publications and their ups and downs. It means that the public relations offices should send their reports only to publications approved by the Ministry of Culture and refrain from having any contact with publications not approved by it."

Under the Press Act the press has the right to publish the views of the public and the authorities, and receiving and publishing domestic and foreign news is the legal right of the press; also, according to the Constitution, the press is free to reflect the facts. However, the honorable minister of culture and Islamic guidance, while expressing his own views about imposing more and more news restrictions on the press, believes that the press must publish news as the public relations offices have prepared and deemed appropriate.

How should one interpret the contradiction between the Press Act and the Constitution and the honorable minister's remarks? The law regards independence as the right of the press and the minister regards following orders the duty of the press.

At a recent news conference the head of the judiciary declared that Iran emphasizes the observing of the rights of reporters and the press. That lawful and correct stance of the judiciary is evident, particularly with the setting up of a press court in the presence of a jury.

Now the same question must be repeated; that is, why do certain parts of the executive machinery not adopt that lawful stance regarding the rights of the press, as emphasized by the head of the judiciary?

Iran: Pro-Rafsanjani Weekly To Close After 17 Issues

LD0105103196 Tehran SALAM in Persian 28 Apr 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "BAHMAN Weekly Stops Publication"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The weekly BAHMAN [unofficial organ of the pro-Rafsanjani faction] has stopped publication after 17 issues and will not print any more.

Our correspondent, quoting informed sources, reports that the decision to stop printing was taken by the editor in chief of the weekly. We tried to contact him, without much success.

It is worth mentioning that the weekly BAHMAN, in its last issue yesterday [27 April], hinted that it might stop publication. It wrote yesterday:

"The interest and sensitivity shown in BAHMAN has been greater than expected. Some readers, colleagues, and writers have approved of our weekly's strategy and content; and this has made BAHMAN responsible not to resign itself to decline. Should BAHMAN fail to maintain and improve its quality, it would prefer to close down. We thank our honorable readers, and should publication come to an end, the remainder of their subscriptions will be returned to them."

Mr. Ata'ollah Mohajerani, editor in chief of the weekly, is the vice president for legal and parliamentary affairs. He is an influential member of the Servants of Reconstruction group.

Iran: Daily Criticizes Decision To Upgrade Nuclear Reactors

LD0105083396 Tehran IRNA in English 0622 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 1, IRNA — The English daily 'KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL' Wednesday [1 May] took notice of the decision made in a recent nuclear meeting in Moscow and stressed that the upgrading of unsafe nuclear reactors would be a big step backward for nuclear safety.

The editorial said the conference pledged real action to prevent nuclear disasters such as the one that happened in Chernobyl and to stop more people from having the capability to make atomic bombs.

"But a combination of harsh economic realities and political sensitivity could make it difficult to turn the summit's fine words a decade after the Chernobyl disaster into reality," it added.

Turning to international studies which assessed that it would cost around dlrs. 20 billion to close down the riskiest Soviet-era reactors as fast as possible, the paper said that Russia and other countries have disclosed that they cannot afford to shell out this amount and that they need the energy that is being generated by these installations.

Criticizing the summit, the article wrote, "There were no pledges of extra cash from the world's rich nations to help with these problems to put an end to the threat of pollution and the risks of nuclear weapons proliferation."

Reviewing the final communique, it noted that the world cannot be considered safer after the summit, adding that there are some who believe that the summit was an absolute disaster on the issue of nuclear safety.

"The fact that the participants have endorsed to modernize and upgrade the oldest unsafe nuclear reactors,

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instead of shutting them down, is indeed a big step backward for nuclear safety," it concluded.

Iran: Rafsanjani Eyeing Assembly of Experts

96LA0177D London KEYHAN in Persian 21 Mar 96 p 32

[All quotation marks and ellipses in the original]

[FBIS Translated Text] Even though the struggle over whether the location of the Assembly of Experts should be in Tehran or Qom is an old struggle, it continues. While Khomeyni was alive and ruled over the Islamic Republic from the Jamaran royal court, the Assembly of Experts was held in Tehran, but since most of the influential members of the Assembly of Experts are teachers of the Qom Seminary and its chairman, 'Ali Meshkini, is the Friday imam of Qom, its meetings are mostly held in Qom.

Even though some sources say that the meetings of the Assembly of Experts are not without commotion, rarely is anything from its minutes leaked. For example, in a meeting in which the experts chose 'Ali Khamene'i to replace Ruhollah Khomeyni as the leader, the quarreling was so severe that the meeting almost ended in a physical fight, but official sources only make slight reference to it. Some analysts have compared the Assembly of Experts to the Senate, but in fact this assembly is quite different.

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic states that "the number and qualifications of the experts, the conditions for their election, and its internal bylaws..." for the first term shall be determined by "the religious jurists of the First Council of Guardians," but only for one time. "From then on, any change or revision...regarding the duties of the experts is within their own authority."

It is rumored that after he no longer has access to the presidency, Rafsanjani will try to become the chairman of the Assembly of Experts, whereas at the present, he is its first deputy chairman. This has caused a deterioration of his relationship with Meshkini, the present chairman of the experts.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Muslim Militant Leader Shot Dead in Punjab

BK0105040096 Hong Kong AFP in English 1651 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad April 30 (AFP) — Unidentified assailants Tuesday [30 April] shot dead a leader of the extremist Moslem organisation Sipha Sahaba-e-Pakistan (SSP) in Punjab province, party leaders and officials said.

Hafiz Abbas, in his 40s, was killed by armed men who entered his house in Sheikhupura some 40 kilometers (25 miles) west of the Punjab provincial capital of Lahore on the second day of Moslem festival of 'Id al-Adha, they said.

SSP is an extremist Sunni organisation which has expressed vehement views against the Shi'ite minority of Pakistan.

The SSP leaders blamed a rival Shi'ite faction, Tehrik-e-Jafria Pakistan, for the murder.

Several people have been killed in sectarian clashes in the past between extremist Sunni and Shi'ite groups.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Troops Harass Refugees; Protest Held

BK3004142396 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 27 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Three members of a family were killed and their bodies blown to pieces in an Sri Lankan Air Force troop attack on civilian settlements on Mukamalai locality. The incident took place on (?19 April). The people who fell victims to the Sri Lankan government's state terrorism are: 73-year old Kadiravelu Muthukumar, his 31-year old daughter Vasanthi, and an infant, Vasanthi. Many more were injured in the attacks.

A major confrontation has taken place between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] and Sri Lankan troops during its advance toward Kilali. The troops, under a cover of aerial bombings and missile attacks, are reported to have reached Kilali. Transport to and from Kilali has been cut off. Although a large number of refugees have crossed the Kilali lagoon, several more are still under the clutches of the military. It is learned that the military is torturing refugee youths, who have been arrested and taken to camps.

Five freedom fighters — Valiant Tigers Mathivanan, Marutham, Sivan, Vani, and Si[illegible]a — attained martyrdom in a stiff battle with Sri Lankan troops in the Jaffna peninsula the day before yesterday.

Valiant Tiger Anbuchelvan embraced martyrdom when a bomb accidentally exploded in the Wanni District last Monday.

Captain Aruna and Second Lieutenant Sivakasi attained martyrdom in the clash at Velikamam on (?4 April). Our tributes go to those national heroes who sacrificed their dear and young lives for the liberation of our motherland.

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A mammoth rally, unprecedented in history, was held at the Swiss parliament house today. About 13,000 Tamils participated in the grand rally to demand the release of its representatives recently arrested and detained by Swiss police. The rally also demanded the recognition of the LTTE as a national organization, that the deportation of refugees during the present tense war situation be halted, and for an end to the portrayal of the LTTE, which a people's organization, as a criminal organization. The LTTE central Committee member Lawrence Thilagar hoisted the national flag and addressed the meeting held in front of the parliament. Many more important figures attended and addressed the gathering. Noteworthy is that the people, who took part in the rally, voluntarily contributed a large amount of cash and ornaments for national defense.

Polling for the first phase of elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies was held in Tamil Nadu today. The polling for 150 assembly and 25 Lok Sabha seats was, by and large, peaceful today, barring stray incidents of violence. It is to be noted that the Congress Party has split into three factions. It is contesting the elections in Tamil Nadu by forging an alliance with local parties.

The Tigers's aspirations: motherland of Tamil Eelam! Thanks.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Criticizes Colombo's Disinformation Campaign

BK3004161496 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 28 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In his urgent telegram to the UN Secretary General headlined "Sri Lankan military is killing innocent Tamils", Shanmugalingam, president of Jaffna University Teachers Association, also mentioned about the indiscriminate bombing raids and missile attacks. Shanmugalingam said the government, under strict press censorship, is preventing foreign journalists from going to the North. He said Colombo has also blacked out news of the attacks on the Tamils to the world. In his telegram, he noted that the Sri Lankan Government aim in doing this is to obliterate the Tamil community.

A body of a boy was washed ashore in Kilali on 25 April. The boy was reported to have been killed in an attack on the boats of refugees fleeing from the grasp of the Sri Lankan military. The fate of the boy's parents is unknown.

Three hundred and twenty-four houses were burned down by Sri Lankan Government troops in Kinnaiyadi in the Batticaloa District. Fearing government terrorism, the people from that locality have already sought asylum in neighboring villages. A Batticaloa government officer has informed the Ministry of Rehabilitation about this incident.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan military has imposed new restrictions on the sale of fuel in Batticaloa. This has hampered commuting and created problems for industry.

The Sri Lankan Government has also launched a disinformation campaign saying that troops have killed a number of Liberation Tigers during the military operation, Riviresa-Two, which began on 19 April. The government propaganda campaign claiming that the Tigers have suffered heavy casualties in the current operation is part of the military's strategy to drag the LTTE into a conflict and to annihilate them.

Only nine LTTE freedom fighters attained martyrdom during the seven days of war from 19 to 25 April.

A Colombo correspondent says the capture of a major portion of the Jaffna peninsula and siege of a number of people there by the military cannot be considered a victory.

Former Air Force commander Hari Gunatillake said that this military action has not in any way affected the LTTE or weakened them. Therefore, it cannot be regarded as a victory. He has also pointed out the fact that troops are placed in the unavoidable position of having to confront the LTTE's fierce guerrilla-style attacks. [Passage omitted on interview by BBC World Service by Anton Raja, LTTE's spokesman based in London, on current military operation in Jaffna]

Thanks.

The Tigers's aspirations: motherland of Tamil Eelam!

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